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THE WORKS

OF

VICESIMUS KNOX, D.D.

WITH A

BIOGRAPHICAL PREFACE.

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IN SEVEN VOLUMES.

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CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY.

CONSIDERATIONS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

PREFACE

TO

THE FIRST EDITION.

As every attempt to illustrate and recommend such opinions on RELIGION, as oppose the pride of human reason, is obnoxious to misconception, misrepresentation, and rash censure; I think it proper to entreat all who honour this book with their attention, duly to consider the high AUTHORITIES, human as well as scriptural, on which its doctrines are founded; and not to reject opinions in which their own happiness is most deeply concerned, till they shall have invalidated those human authorities, and proved themselves superior in sagacity, learning, and piety, to the great men whose sentiments I have cited in support of my own.

There is no doubt but that my subject is the most momentous which can fall under the contemplation of a human being; and I therefore venture to claim for it, a dispassionate and unprejudiced consideration.

The moral world, as well as the political, appears, at present, to be greatly out of order. Moral and political confusion, indeed, naturally produce each

other. Let all who love their species, or their country, calmly consider whether the neglect or rejection of Christianity may not be the real cause of moral and political: and let those who are thus persuaded, cooperate with every attempt to revive and diffuse the TRUE SPIRIT OF THE GOSPEL. "Let us meekly instruct those that oppose themselves,"* (if God, peradventure, will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth,) "not being overcome of evil, but overcoming evil with good."†

Nor let a private clergyman be thought to step out of his province, in thus endeavouring to tranquillize the tumult of the world, by calling the attention of erring and wretched mortals to the gospel of peace. He is justified, not only by the general principles of humanity, but by the particular command of the religion of which he is a minister. Thus saith the Apostle, in a charge which may be considered as generally addressed to all ordained preachers of the Gospel, who having taken the oversight of the flock, are in the true sense of the word επισκοποι, or overseers.

"Feed the flock of God, as much as lieth in you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingness; not for filthy lucre, but of ready mind.‡ Take heed to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."§

* 2 Tim. ii. 25.
† Romans, xii. 21.
‡ 1 Pet. v. 2.
§ Acts, xx. 28.

This I have humbly attempted; and, in imitation of a most excellent prelate,* I have adapted my book to all the flock; yet various parts of it more particularly to various descriptions of men; some to the great, some to the learned, but the greater part to the people: remembering the Apostle's example, who says, "To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some; and this I do for the GOSPEL'S SAKE, that I might be a partaker thereof with you."†

And now, readers, before you proceed any farther, let me be permitted to say to you, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with you," in your progress through this book, and also through life, even to its close.

* Bishop Sanderson, who preached in an appropriate manner, *ad aulam, ad magistratum, ad clerum, ad populum.*—See the titles of his Sermons.

† 1 Cor. ix. 22.

PREFACE

TO

THE SUBSEQUENT EDITIONS.

"THE modern method," says an ingenious divine,* "of perpetually discussing the evidence of the Christian religion in the way of curiosity and literary debate, has a tendency to keep the mind in a very immoral suspense; and to divert it from habituating itself to the temper and precepts of the religion, thus made the subject of endless disquisition. The NEW TESTAMENT INCLUDES ITS OWN EVIDENCE."†

This opinion alone would justify the design of the subsequent volume, which is to persuade men to

* Dr. APTHORPE.

† "——— *La larga ploia*
De lo Spirito Santo,
E' syllogismo, che la m'ha conchiusa
Acutamente si, ch'enversa-d'ella
Ogni demonstration mi par obtusa."

The abundant shower of divine grace which is diffused over the Scriptures, becomes an argument so cogent and conclusive to my [illegible] comparison with it, all demonstration appears inefficacious. DANTE, quoted by F. SIMON and by Dr. APTHORPE.

habituate themselves to the "temper and precepts of the Christian religion," instead of spending their lives in ostentatious disquisitions on its external evidence.

In opposing the doctrines of those who call themselves, by way of eminence, the rational Christians, or the philosophers, I foresaw that I rendered myself obnoxious both to misapprehension and misrepresentation. I was not unprepared to bear consequences which I predicted. They excite no surprise; and even the pain which they might otherwise inflict, is prevented by a consciousness of having, with singleness of heart, espoused a cause beneficial to mankind, and founded on scriptural, as well as the HIGHEST HUMAN authority.

Nevertheless I think it right, not to neglect an opportunity of farther explaining the scope of these pages; because such an explanation may render them more efficacious in accomplishing their good purpose.

My book, as, I think, must have been evident to every attentive and unprejudiced observer, was, in the first instance, designed to counteract, among the multitude, the effect of Mr. Paine's Age of Reason, Volney's Ruins, and the general example of French apostasy.

But what mode of counteraction did I adopt? that of producing* historical evidence or abstruse

* Dr. Cudworth was a philosopher of the very first order, deeply learned, and singularly sagacious. Yet, what says he on the subject of producing faith by historical evidence? the following words are from the Preface to his *Intellectual System*:

argument? no; I had seen them both repeatedly used, with little or no effect on the mass of the people, among whom the effect was, on all accounts, chiefly to be desired; because they are most exposed to the misery resulting from the want of a guide, and the delusions of a fallacious one. The grand attack on Christianity having been made in a popular mode, a popular mode of repelling it appeared to me likely to be most effectual. To learn this popular mode, should I repair to the dreary schools of metaphysics? should I unfold the rolls of history so often presented in vain to the eye of the unbeliever? Should I not rather go to the churches of the great city, where thronging multitudes crowd

"Scripture faith is not a mere believing of historical things upon testimonies only; but a certain higher and diviner power in the soul, that peculiarly correspondeth with the Deity."

"Faith," says the celebrated Dr. Heylin, "is an impression of the Almighty on the heart of man. This experimental efficacious knowledge of God, manifesting himself to his worshippers, and thereby disposing and inclining them to their duty; this knowledge, I say, is what we call Faith, and is the proper basis of all religion."

Monsieur Paschal says, "It is the heart, and not the reason, which has properly the perception of God. God sensible to the heart, is the most compendious description of true and perfect Faith."

As to reasoning, men may reason in defence of what they do not believe, and may reason so as not easily to be refuted, yet without producing belief in their readers or hearers. Rousseau says, "Boyle's Lectures might have been written by a society of unbelievers." It may be doubted whether the Warburtonian, Bamptonian, and other lectures of a similar kind have produced much advantage to the cause of piety and true religion, notwithstanding the benevolence of the institutors and the ingenuity of the lecturers. They keep alive objections, (brought forward to furnish subject matter,) which left alone would die and be forgotten.

for admission, and stand on tiptoe to listen to the preacher as to a living oracle? there, amid much impropriety of accent, vulgarity of language, and extraneous matter, (a species of oratory little to be approved, by a mind versed in the study of classical models,) I discovered the charm which won the hearts, and through them convinced the understandings of the multitude. The charm was no other than a display of the Spirit's evidence, and the doctrine of grace. I wanted an effectual principle to proceed upon, and I sought it not only on the shelves of deserted libraries, but also in the living world, under the guidance of experience. I sought and found a principle, which might, I thought, make its way, like the books of Paine, and the example of France; not among the learned few only, but also among the mixed multitude that constitute the people, or, if you please, the populace. The poison was epidemically diffused, and required an epidemical antidote. Something was wanted to touch and meliorate the HEART of the whole people. The understanding of the multitude usually obeys the impulse of the heart; and when the main spring, the heart, is in its proper place and state, the whole machine performs its office with few and short deviations from rectitude.

Addresses to the heart, founded on the doctrine of divine influence, I had observed, in the crowded congregations of the metropolis, to be productive of pure morals, warm devotion, diffusive charity, and the strongest attachment to the Christian religion. I had seen, if the human eye can presume

to judge, the most unshaken faith among the poor, to whom the Gospel was preached by men, poor themselves, and scarcely better furnished with human learning, than the fishermen of Galilee. The Holy Spirit's energy was their favourite doctrine, a doctrine no less sublime and consolatory, than sound and true. The good which I found in their matter I adopted, while I endeavoured to avoid the apparent evil of their manner. It is their manner which gives offence; and prevents among the higher ranks, whose welfare is as dear to the benevolent preacher as that of the lowest, the diffusion of the most salutary doctrine of the Gospel. I reprobated all fanaticism in their conduct—all irregularity in their proceedings, wishing all things to be done in order. I exploded all ranting in the pulpit, all theatrical tricks, all hypocritical extravagance, all ignorant effrontery; but, separating the wheat from the chaff, I retained the sound doctrine of the Spirit's energy, founded as it is in Scripture, enforced in the plainest terms by the church, and recommended by the eloquence and arguments of the most regular, most learned, and exalted divines of this and all other countries of Christendom.*

* From Erasmus to Secker, Townson, Horsley, and many more, besides those cited in this volume.

Even PELAGIUS, (whose real name was MORGAN, (*Marigena,*) whence the latinized name Pelagius,) even Pelagius himself believed in the agency of the Divine Spirit, though he has given rise to the famous sect of *Pelagians*, who deny it. Pelagius was grossly misrepresented. We have his own words confessing his belief in this article. The reader may find them in WALL *on Infant Baptism.* This passage of a native of our island, Morgan or Pelagius, a

I have intimated in the following pages, that I purposely chose this topic, for reviving Christian faith and practice, and dwelt upon it the rather, because I had observed, that it had been neglected by recent and respectable divines, and even exploded with marks of contumely. Since the prevalence of methodism, it had been branded with the epithets, mystic, fanatic, enthusiastic.

It would be tedious to introduce the numberless passages from late authors, who have joined in discountenancing the doctrine of the Spirit's agency, in accomplishing what the Gospels call Regeneration. It shall suffice to quote one passage from a living writer, a divine still more respectable for his talents and virtues, than his exalted rank in the Church of England, though, as a man, liable to error. The following are the words of Archdeacon Paley:

"If any one asks—what the expressions in Scripture, regenerate—born of the spirit—new creatures, mean?—we answer, that they mean nothing! nothing to us!—nothing to be found, or sought for, in the present circumstances of Christianity!"*

Such words uttered in the most peremptory manner, by high authority, the authority of eminent genius, learning, and station in the church, are

Welshman, is two hundred years older than any writing whatever extant by a Briton. Morgan was a very able man, and for learning, at that age, an honour to our country. Controversialists must fix on somebody to write against, or they would want a subject. But Pelagius (or Morgan) appears to have been a believer in the doctrine of grace.

* See Paley's Sermon preached at the visitation of Edmund Lord Bishop of Carlisle, July 15, 1777; printed for Faulder.

counterbalanced, as they ought, by authority of, at least, equal weight, in passages quoted in the following pages. Add to this, the decision of the Church, displayed in her articles and liturgy, and the weight of authority, will preponderate in favour of the Spirit's agency, in producing the change called regeneration. In producing this change, it unavoidably produces the highest evidence in the mind of the believer, and leaves him fully convinced of the truth, as well as excellence of Christianity. *Faith is the gift of God,*—"and he to whom God has given faith, wants no proofs; while he who is destitute of faith, will not be convinced by any demonstration."*

The sanctifying power of the Spirit, on the heart and life, is the highest of all evidence to the truth of the Christian religion; and it is not necessary to a saving faith, that a plain man should know any thing of demonstrations.

But let not the superior value and importance of internal evidence entirely supersede the external, or render it suspected of wanting a firm foundation.

* "*Cui fidem largitus est Deus, probationes non requirit; qui fide caret, nulla illi sufficiet demonstratio.*"

Huetii Præfat. ad Demonst. Evang. page 7.

Huet wrote his "*Demonstration*" to bring the reasoners to *listen*;—but acknowledges that grace must produce true saving faith. He says, "*Probari potest Religionis Christianæ veritas eo genere demonstrationis, quod non minus certum est quam demonstrationes ipsæ geometricæ.*" "The truth of the Christian religion may be proved by a kind of demonstration, not less certain than the geometrical."—Yet still he acknowledges, that after all—Faith must be given by God, and that *saving* faith arises not from demonstrations.

The external evidence is to those who are to *teach* the people, and to answer gainsayers, of great importance; and it is of importance to all, so far as it is within the reach of all, which some of it certainly is; but the internal evidence is the SEAL; and till that is applied and fixed, faith will be found to fluctuate, and the mind be led to waver, by the first ingenious objector, who may have recourse to specious learning, to plausible sophistry, or even to burlesque and ridicule.

Nothing could be farther from my intentions, than to set at nought the external evidence of Christianity. All sorts of evidence are to be desired, which can by any means influence human beings, in fixing their choice, and directing their conduct, respecting matters which involve their happiness, present and future. The external evidence may lead to the internal; as the light of a taper may serve to guide a wanderer out of a dark cavern, till he comes to the open daylight, when the living lustre of the Heavens will render the taper useless, and even extinguish its dim light by overpowering radiance.

But if men are to be taught of God, it has been asked, will not the ministry be rendered useless? what is left for the clergy to do? I answer, that God vouchsafes to teach by the instrumentality of men: and that the clergy have much to do, under the teaching of God, as ministers of his grace. An order of men set apart for the study of sacred things, and of eloquence requisite to display their beauty and value to the thoughtless and unfeeling, cannot but

be highly useful and indeed necessary. God's spirit will assist, but not supersede their endeavours in the ministry.

If men are to be taught of God, it has been asked again, whether our own efforts will not become superfluous? I answer, by no means. I set out in this treatise with endeavouring to fix in the mind as a maxim: "He that will know whether the doctrine of Christ be true, must do his will." Moral and intellectual improvement must be as earnestly sought as if there were no promise of supernatural assistance; just as the husbandman must plough and sow diligently, though he knows that the sun and the showers are absolutely necessary to give the due increase.

Cavils, objections, and calumnious reproach will usually arise from some quarter or other, whenever religious opinions are freely and artlessly discussed, without any attempt to court the favour of sects and parties.

The path of literary life that leads along the vale of obscurity is the path of peace. Whoever ventures to bring forward the result of studies in theology is peculiarly exposed to the shafts of angry pamphleteers. All indeed are interested in the subject, and they, whose opinion is opposed, feel displeasure and express contempt. The silent divine, who takes things as he finds them, chooses the smoothest and readiest road to favour. It was this view of things which induced the celebrated Bishop Hare to write his treatise on the difficulties and discouragements

which attend the study of the Scriptures in the way of private judgment. He has the following remarkable passage in that treatise: "Every mean person," says he, "who has nothing to recommend him but his orthodoxy, and owes that perhaps wholly to his ignorance, will think (if you venture to publish an unfashionable opinion) he has a right to trample upon you with contempt, to asperse your character with virulent reflections, to run down your writings as mean and pitiful performances, and give hard names to opinions which he does not understand."

Such being the case, if a man had not learned a little Christian philosophy, he would choose to spend his time in inglorious ease, and enjoying plenty, make, according to the advice of Chesterfield, the world his bubble. But though exertion for the benefit of mankind, and distinction in consequence of it, bring many pains and penalties, often create enemies instead of friends, and injure worldly interest, yet knowledge is delightful, beneficence a duty, and every inconvenience which may arise from the diligent pursuit or diffusion of the one, and the faithful performance of the other, should be borne with alacrity.

With respect to myself, the proud and censorious spirit of the self-honoured philosopher, and self-named rational Christian, shall never disturb my complacency, so long as I find that the opinions which displease them are founded on holy writ, and maintained by the ornaments of this country and of human nature.

As one of my chief objects is to promote among

mankind the gentler affections, to the exclusion or mitigation of all malice and revenge, I shall not risk the loss of my own good-humour, by entering into the bitterness of controversy, however folly may misunderstand, or malevolence misrepresent me. They do no despite to me; let them beware lest they do *despite to the Spirit of grace.**

* Heb. x. 29.

CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY:

OR,

THE EVIDENCE AND EXCELLENCE

OF

REVEALED RELIGION.

SECTION I.

Cupimus enim investigare quid verum sit; neque id solum, sed quod cum veritate, pietatem quoque præterea erga Deum habeat conjunctam.—*It is my object to inquire what is true; but not to acquiesce merely in the discovery of speculative truth; but to find out that doctrine which, together with truth, unites* PIOUS AFFECTIONS *to God.*

SADOLET.

INTRODUCTORY.

I ENTER on the subject of this volume with unaffected diffidence. I tread on holy ground with awe. Though much of my life, devoted to letters from the earliest age, has been spent in reading the best writers on the Christian doctrine, and more in contemplation of it, yet a sense of its high importance, and of my own fallibility, has long restrained the impulse which prompted me to engage in its public discussion. Nothing but conscious rectitude of intention, cooperating with the hope of obtaining the aid of God's holy Spirit and the reader's indulgence, could animate the tremulous mind in an enterprise to which it feels and avows itself unequal. A conviction that the subject is peculiarly seasonable, has contributed to overcome reluctance. The TIMES indeed appear to me to call upon every professor of

Christianity to vindicate, in the manner best adapted to his abilities and opportunities, its controverted truth, and insulted honour; and if I shall be fortunate enough to communicate one suggestion to the wavering mind, which may conduce to this great purpose, my labour will not be in vain, nor my undertaking rashly adventurous. I shall have accomplished my wish. To diffuse the sunshine of religious hope and confidence over the shadowy path of life; to dissipate the gloom of despair; to contribute, in the smallest degree, to the salvation of a fellow-creature: objects so desirable inspire an ardour which enables zeal in a good cause to triumph over timidity.

That unbelief in Christ is increasing in the present age, and that the spirit of the times is rather favourable to its increase, has been asserted by high authority, and is too notorious to admit denial. The apostasy of a great nation, in the most enlightened and polished part of Europe; the public, unblushing avowel of atheism among some of its leaders; the multiplication of books on the Continent, in which Christianity is treated as a mere mode of fanaticism; all these circumstances have combined, with others, to cause in many persons not only an indifference to the religion of Christ, but contempt and aversion to his very name. It were easy to cite contumelious reproaches of his person, as well as audacious denials of his claim to divine authority. But with such citations I will not pollute my page, which, however it may be deformed by error, shall not be stained with the transfusion of blasphemy. It is to be wished that all such works could be consigned to immediate and everlasting oblivion; but, I am sorry to say that they are diffused with an industry, which, if it appeared in making proselytes to truth, would be in the highest degree meritorious. Almost every in-

dividual in our own country can now read; and manuals of infidelity, replete with plausible arguments, in language level to the lowest classes, are circulated among the people, at a price which places them within reach of the poorest member of the community. They may indeed be despised by the rich and neglected by the learned, but they fall into the hands of the poor, to many of whom any plausible opinion in print bears the stamp of authority. At the same time, it must be lamented that there are treatises of a higher order, on the side of infidelity, which come recommended to the superior ranks, to men of knowledge and education, with all the charms of wit and elegance.

But it cannot be said that in this country the apologists and defenders of Christianity have been few, or unfurnished with abilities natural and acquired. Great have been the efforts of our profoundest scholars, both professional divines and laymen, in maintaining the cause of Christianity, and in repelling, by argument, by ridicule, by invective, by various and deep erudition, the assaults of the infidel. Yet what shall we say? Notwithstanding their stupendous labours, continued with little intermission during many centuries, the great cause which they have maintained, is evidently, at this moment, on the decline. Though many of them, not contented with persuasion and argument, have professed to DEMONSTRATE the truth of the Christian religion, it is certain that a very great number of men in Christian countries continue unpersuaded, unconvinced, and totally blind to their demonstration. Such being the case, after all their voluminous productions, is it not fair to conclude that their defences, however celebrated, are either erroneous in the mode, or defective in the matter? Had their success been equal to their

labours and pretensions, infidelity in Europe must now have been utterly exterminated.

For the learned labours of theologists, the subtility of schoolmen, the erudition of critics, the ingenuity of controversialists, I feel a sincere respect; but I cannot help thinking that their productions have contributed rather to the amusement of recluse scholars already persuaded of Christianity, than to the conversion of the infidel and the instruction of the people. It appears to me, that some of the most elaborate of the writings in defence of Christianity are too cold in their manner, too metaphysical or abstruse in their arguments, too little animated with the spirit of piety, to produce any great or durable effect on the heart of man, formed as he is, not only with intellectual powers, but with fine feelings and a glowing imagination. They touch not the trembling fibres of sensibility.* They are insipid to the palate of the people. They have no attractions for the poor, the great multitude to whom the gospel was particularly preached. They are scarcely intelligible but to scholars in their closets, and while they amuse, perhaps, without convincing the understanding, they leave the most susceptible part of man, his bosom, unaffected. The busy world, eager in pursuit of wealth, honour, and pleasure, pays them no regard; though they are the very persons whose attention to religion, which they are too apt to forget, ought, in such books, chiefly to be solicited. The academic recluse, the theologist by profession, may perhaps read them as a task or as an amusement. He may consider them as works of erudition and exercises of

* ——Lævâ in parte mamillæ
Nil salit.
——No chord about the heart
Is taught to vibrate. Juv.

ingenuity, claiming great praise as the product of literary leisure, and affording models for imitation to himself, who is in pursuit of similar praise. In the mean time *the people are erring and straying like lost sheep*, and cannot in these calls recognise the voice of the good Shepherd. Such works indeed seldom reach the people; and while they are celebrated in academic cloisters, their very existence is unknown among the haunts of men, in the busy hum of cities; where it is most desirable that they should be known, because there the great majority of human creatures is assembled, and there also the poison of temptation chiefly requires the antidote of religion. What avails it that defences of Christianity are very learned and very subtle, if they are so dry and unaffecting as to be confined in their effects to sequestered scholars, far removed from the active world, and some of them probably so firmly settled in the faith, as to require no new persuasives, no additional proofs to render them faithful followers of Jesus Christ.

Apologies and defences of this kind have very little effect in silencing infidel writers or changing their opinions. They frequently furnish fresh matter for dispute, and put polished arms into the hands of the enemy. By provoking discussion on points which were at rest, they raise sophistry from its slumbers, and blow the trumpet of controversial wars, which do great mischief before the reestablishment of peace. In the issue, the contending parties are silenced rather from weariness in the contest, and inattention of the spectators, than from conviction; and Te Deum, as in other wars, is sung by those who are said to be vanquished, no less than by those who claim the honour of a complete victory.

Thus it has often happened that the writings of

men, sometimes no less benevolent in their intentions than able in their exertions, have not only done no good to the cause of religion, but great injury. They have revived old cavils and objections, or invented new, in order to display ingenuity in refuting them; cavils and objections which have frequently been answered, or which might never have occurred; but which, when once they have occurred, produce suspicion and unsettled notions on topics never doubted,* and among honest men whose faith was firmly established. Such conduct is like that of a physician, who should administer doses of arsenic to his patients, in order to prove to them, at their risk, the sovereign power of his nostrum. The venom, finding a constitution favourable to its operation, triumphantly prevails over the antidote, and the preventive remedy cannot rescue the sufferer from his hapless fate.

I am persuaded, that even a sensible, thinking, and learned man might live his whole life in piety and peace, without ever dreaming of those objections to Christianity, which some of its most celebrated defenders have collected together from all ages and a great variety of neglected books, and then combined in a single portable volume, so as to render it a convenient manual or synopsis of infidelity. What must be the consequence? It must at least disturb the repose of the sensible, thinking, and learned man; and if it should be read and understood by the simple, the unlearned, the unthinking, and the ill-

* "The laboured productions," said a very popular deist, "of Dr. Clarke himself, on the existence of a Deity, have rather contributed to make for the other side of the question, and raised a thousand new doubts on the reader's mind." Wherever a very laborious effort seems to be made to defend a doctrine, the appearance of a great struggle in its defence leaves a suspicion that it is scarcely defensible.

disposed, I am of opinion that its objections would be studied, its solutions neglected; and thus a very large number of recruits enlisted, by defenders of the faith, as volunteers in the army of unbelievers.

As one exemplification of what I have here advanced, I mention in this place, Bishop Warburton's View of Lord Bolingbroke's Philosophy. There the unbeliever sees the scattered arguments of scepticism and unbelief all picked and culled for him, without any trouble of his own, and marked with inverted commas, so as to direct the eye, without loss of time, to their immediate perusal. The book becomes an *anthologia* of infidelity. The full-blown flowers are gathered from the stalks, and conveniently tied up in a nosegay. The essence is extracted and put into a phial commodious for the pocket, and fitted for hourly use. The late Bishop Horne also, in his facetious Letters on Infidelity, has collected passages from obscure books and one wretched anonymous pamphlet, and sent them abroad in such a manner as must of necessity cause them to be read and received where they never would have found their way by their native force. Such ingenious and well-meaning divines resuscitate the dead, and give life to the still-born or abortive offspring of dulness and malignity. I might mention many more instances of similar imprudence,* in men of the deepest erudition, and I believe, the sincerest piety; but I am unwilling to follow their example, in pointing out to unbelievers compendiums, abridgements, and manuals of sceptical cavil. To say in their excuse that they refute those arguments which they insert

* A very remarkable one is that of Dr. John Leland, who employs nearly six hundred pages in *viewing* Lord Bolingbroke's Deistical Opinions, quoting the most striking passages on almost every page. This conduct is like preserving vipers or monsters in spirits for an exhibition.

so liberally from the writings of the unbeliever, may prove our candour, but not our judgment or knowledge of human nature. Evil is learned sooner and remembered longer than good; and it would be better to let the books and pamphlets of the deists sink into oblivion, than to preserve and extend them, by extracting their most noxious parts, and then mixing them with the productions of sound learning and unaffected piety. The refutations are often long, laboured, and tedious, while the objections are short and lively. The refutations are therefore either not read or soon forgotten, while the flippant sarcasm of the sceptic attracts attention and fixes itself in the memory. It must also be allowed, that the refutations are too often unsatisfactory; and that the weakness of the defence invites new attacks, and gives fresh courage to the restless enemy.

The style also and manner of some among the celebrated defenders of Christianity is extremely improper.* It is not respectful. It treats Jesus Christ as if he were an inferior to the person who takes upon him to examine, as he phrases it, the *pretensions* of Jesus Christ. To speak in authoritative, inquisitorial language of the Author of that religion by which the author himself professes to hope for salvation, is inconsistent with such professions, and with a reverence for Christianity. Think of a poor, frail, sinful mortal, sitting a self-appointed judge, and like a lawyer in a human court of judicature, arraigning Jesus Christ, the Lord of life. A venal solicitor might thus have questioned the two thieves that were crucified with him, had they been

* Some of them talk much and magisterially about the *claims* of Jesus (without adding the appellation of Christ, or any respectful epithet); they talk also, with a familiar air, of the carpenter's son, the Galilean, and even, as will be presently noticed more particularly, the *peasant* of Galilee.

accused at a modern police-office. The cold yet authoritative style of the tribunal has been much used by poor sinful mortals in examining, as it is called, that religion which brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. You would think the learned theologist, who assumes the office of an examiner, another Pontius Pilate. He places himself in the seat of judgment, and with an air of judicial importance decisively pronounces his opinion on the words and actions of that person, whom he owns, at the same time, to be the great Captain of salvation.

In such defences or examinations, Jesus Christ, as I have just now intimated, is spoken of in terms that must divest him of his glory, and therefore vilify him in the eyes of the gainsayers, and all unthinking people. But how, on the contrary, do the prophets represent him? Language has no terms of magnificence adequate to his dignity.

The prophets describe Jesus Christ as the most august personage which it is possible to conceive. They speak of him indeed as the Seed of the woman and the Son of man; but at the same time describe him of celestial race. They announce him as a being exalted above men and angels; above "all principality and power; as the Word and the Wisdom of God; as the eternal Son of the Father; as the Heir of all things, by whom God made the worlds; as the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of his person."

Thus speak the prophets of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Now let us hear an ingenious apologist and defender of him and his religion. A reverend author, highly estimable for his learning and ingenuity, and whom I sincerely esteem, speaking of Jesus Christ, in a book professedly written to vindicate his truth and honour, repeatedly calls him,

"a Jewish peasant," and a "peasant of Galilee." "For what are we comparing?" says he, (in a comparison of Jesus Christ with Mahomet,) "a Galilean PEASANT, accompanied with a few fishermen, with a conqueror at the head of his army;" and again, in the next page, he says, "a Jewish PEASANT overthrew the religion of the world."

Unbelievers are commonly, what are called, men of the world; fascinated by its pomps and vanities. Is it the most likely means to overcome their prejudices and teach them to bow the knee to Jesus, thus to lower his personal dignity? Was there any occasion for it? Do not the prophets, as I have just now observed, exalt him above every name? Why call him a Jewish peasant? The term is by no means appropriate to him, supposing that it were not an injudicious degradation of his character in the eyes of unthinking worldlings and malignant unbelievers. It is also peculiarly offensive to hear dignified ecclesiastics, who live in splendour and affluence entirely in consequence of the religion of Jesus Christ, speaking of him in their defences of his religion, as a peasant, as a person, compared to themselves, vile and despicable. Neither will such arguments as this appellation is meant to support, render service to Christianity. No; for the men of the world will say it was impossible for a peasant to effect so much; and therefore they will, like Mr. Gibbon, attribute the success of Christianity merely to political artifice. They will attribute it to king-craft, state-craft, and priest-craft, forcing a religion upon the weak, the timorous, and the ignorant. They will attribute more to Constantine than to St. Paul; and will mock the Jewish peasant, and all who bow the knee to him. The representation becomes to the worldly man a stumbling block and a rock of offence.

I might produce several other instances of great writers, all professed defenders of the faith, who have afforded similar precedents for degrading appellations of Jesus Christ. But I rather wish such precedents to be lost in eternal oblivion, than revived for the entertainment of the scorner, by a citation of them in this place. I shall only observe, that as expressions of this sort do not appear to flow from a reverential piety, so neither are they likely to excite and promote it.

Mere argumentative disquisition, indeed, unanimated by the spirit of piety and devotion, will never avail to convert unbelievers, and to diffuse the doctrines of Christianity. Life, death, heaven, and hell, are subjects of too much importance to be treated by a sincere mind, duly impressed by them, with the coolness of a lawyer giving an opinion on a statute or case in which another's property or privileges are concerned. The spirit of piety seems to have been wanting in some of the most logical and metaphysical defenders of Christianity. They speak of Christ, when they are examining the truth of his pretensions, as they call them, with calm indifference as if they were dull virtuosi discussing the genuineness of a medal, or the authenticity of a manuscript, valuable merely as an amusing curiosity. If St. Paul had been no warmer an advocate than certain famous apologists for Christ's doctrine, he would never have prevailed with the Gentiles to relinquish their polytheism, and we of this island might have remained to this day in the darkness of idolatry. Without the spirit of piety, all proofs and defences of Christianity are a dead letter. The multitude will not even read them; and infidels, if they do not despise them too much to attend to them at all, will only read to find fresh matter for cavil and objection.

I may be wrong in this theory, and I therefore appeal to fact. The fact is evident, that, notwithstanding all that has been written to *demonstrate** Christianity, by argument drawn from reasoning and history, infidelity has increased, and is every day increasing more and more. Let those who think the dry argumentative apologies irresistibly convincing, bring them forward NOW, and silence the gainsayers at once. The demonstrations of a Huet, the evidences of a Clarke, the reasonings of a Locke, a Grotius, a Hartley, should be presented to the people in the most striking manner, by public authority; and if they are really efficacious in producing conviction, we may be assured that infidelity will vanish at their appearance, like the mists of an autumnal morning, when the sun breaks forth in meridian splendour. But the truth is, they are already very much diffused, they are to be met with on every stall, and yet the Christian religion is said to be rapidly on the decline.

As these attempts appear to have failed, it cannot be blamable to devise some other method of calling back the attention of erring mortals to the momentous truths of revelation. I have conceived an idea that our old English divines, who lived at and near the time of the reformation, were great adepts in the knowledge of genuine Christianity, and that their

* "As the advocates of Christianity," says an acute writer, "have multiplied their *demonstrations*, the less it has been believed or regarded; so that now at length the effect seems nearly the same, as might have been expected if they had proved it to be false.—If Christianity appear to a plain man merely a question of words and names, or a curious speculation, he will leave it to the discussion of idle people and philosophers, and may probably treat it with indifference or contempt, in proportion to the zeal and elaborate argument with which it is agitated."

Inquiry into the present State of Religion in England, 1786.

method of recommending it was judicious, because I know it was successful. There was much more piety in the last century than in the present; and there is every reason to believe that infidelity was then rare. Bishop Hall, among many others of his time, appears to me to have been animated with the true spirit of Christianity; and I beg leave to convey my own ideas on the best method of diffusing that spirit, in his pleasingly-pious and simple language.

"There is not," says the venerable prelate, "so much need of learning as of grace to apprehend those things which concern our everlasting peace; neither is it our brain that must be set to work, but our hearts. However excellent the use of scholarship in all the sacred employments of divinity; yet, in the main act, which imports salvation, skill must give place to affection. Happy is the soul that is possest of Christ, how poor soever in all inferior endowments. Ye are wide, O ye great wits, while ye spend yourselves in curious questions and learned extravagancies. Ye shall find one touch of Christ more worth to your souls than all your deep and laborious disquisitions. In vain shall ye seek for this in your books, if you miss it in your bosoms. If you know all things, and cannot say I know whom I have believed, you have but knowledge enough to know yourselves miserable. The deep mysteries of Godliness, which, to the great clerks of the world are as a book clasped and sealed up, lie open before him (the pious and devout man) fair and legible; and while those book-men know whom they have heard of, he knows whom he hath believed."

Christianity indeed, to the pious and unprejudiced, discovers itself, like the sun, by its own lustre. It shines with unborrowed light on the devout heart.

It wants little external proof, but carries its own evidence to him that is regenerate and born of the Spirit. "The truth of Christianity," says a pious author, "is the Spirit of God living and working in it; and when this Spirit is not the life of it, there the outward form is but like the carcass of a departed soul."

Christian theology has certainly been confused and perplexed by the learned. It requires to be disentangled and simplified. Its object appears to me to consist in this single point, the restoration of the divine life, the image of God, (lost or defaced at the fall,) the restoration of it by the influence of the Holy Ghost.

When this shall be restored, every other advantage of Christianity will follow in course. A great degree of purity in morals* is absolutely necessary to the reception of the Holy Ghost, and an unavoidable consequence of his continuance. The attainment of GRACE is then the one thing necessary. It includes in it all gospel comfort, it teaches all moral virtue, and infallibly leads to light, life, and immortality.

* Common and preventing grace, it is asserted by the ablest divines, is given even before complete conversion, where the heart is sincere; and given in such a degree as to cause this purity of morals, and prepare the way for more abundant grace, for sanctification, consolation, and illumination. See the note at the end of the next Section.

SECTION II.

On the Sort of Evidence recommended to notice and attempted to be displayed in this Treatise.

Quid est fideliter Christo credere? est fideliter Dei mandata servare.—*In what consists a faithful belief in Christ? It consists in a faithful obedience to his commandments.* SALVIAN. *de Gub. lib.* 3.

I THINK it right to apprize my reader, on the very threshold, that if he expects a recapitulation of the external and historical evidence of Christianity, he will be disappointed. For all such evidence I must refer him to the great and illustrious names of voluminous theologists, who have filled with honour the professional chairs of universities, and splendidly adorned the annals of literature. I revere their virtuous characters; I highly appreciate their learned labours; I think the student who is abstracted from active life, and possesses leisure, may derive from them much amusement, while he increases his stores of critical erudition, and becomes enabled to discourse in the pulpit, or dispute in the schools on subjects of theology. But men, able to command their time, and competently furnished with ability for deep and extensive investigation, are but a small number in the mass of human beings who want the comforts and the guidance of religion. That systematic or speculative treatise which may delight and instruct students, in the cool shade of philosophical retirement, will have little effect on the minds of others who constitute the multitude of mortals, eagerly engaged in providing for the wants of the passing day, or warmly contending for the glittering prizes of secular ambition. Indeed, I never heard that the

laborious proofs of Christianity, in the historical and argumentative mode, ever converted any of those celebrated authors on the side of infidelity, who have, from time to time, spread an alarm through Christendom, and drawn forth the defensive pens of every church and university in Europe. The infidel wits, unconvinced and unabashed, wrote on in the same cause; deriving fresh matter for cavil from the arguments of the defenders; and reassailing the citadel with the very balls hurled from its battlements.

What then, it may be justly asked, have I to offer? What is the sort of evidence which I attempt to display? It is an internal evidence of the truth of the gospel, consequent on obedience to its precepts. It is a sort of evidence, the mode of obtaining which is pointed out by Jesus Christ himself, in the following declaration: "If any man will do my will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God."*

But how shall he know? By the illumination of the holy Spirit of God, which is promised by Christ to those who do his will.

Therefore if any man seriously and earnestly desire to become a Christian, let him begin,† whatever doubts he may entertain of the truth of Christianity, by practising those moral virtues, and cultivating those amiable dispositions, which the written gospel plainly requires, and the grace of God will gradually remove the veil from his eyes and from his heart, so as to enable him to see and to love the

* John, vii. 17.

† If he begin with natural religion, faithfully practising its duties according to his conscience, the grace of God, it is humbly presumed, will be vouchsafed to him in such measure, as shall render him, in due time, a firm believer in revealed religion.

things which belong to his peace, and which are revealed in the gospel only. Let him make the experiment and persevere. The result will be full conviction that Christianity is true. The sanctifying Spirit will precede, and illumination follow in consequence.

I take it for granted, that God has given all men the means of knowing that which it imports all men to know (and the means of grace are those means); but if, on the contrary, in order to gain the knowledge requisite to become a Christian, it were necessary to read such authors as Grotius, Clarke, Lardner, Locke, or Warburton, how few, in the great mass of mankind, could possibly acquire that knowledge and consequent faith which are thus supposed necessary to their salvation?

Every human being is capable of the evidence which arises from the divine illumination of grace. It is offered in the gospel to all. And they who reject it, and seek only the evidence which human means afford, shut out the sun, and content themselves either with total darkness or the feeble light of a taper.

"There is," says the excellent Bishop Sanderson, "to the outward tender of grace in the ministry of the gospel, annexed an inward offer of the same to the heart, by the spirit of God going along with his word, which some of the schoolmen call *auxilium gratiæ generale*, sufficient of itself to convert the soul of the hearer, if he do not resist the Holy Ghost, and reject the grace offered; which, as it is grounded on these words, 'Behold I stand at the door and knock,' and upon very many passages of Scripture beside, so it standeth with reason that the offer, if accepted, should be sufficient, *ex parte sua*, to do the work, which, if not accepted, is sufficient to

leave the person, not accepting the same, inexcusable."

The outward testimony to the truth of the gospel, is certainly a very strong one; but yet it is found insufficient without the inward testimony; for the truth of which assertion, I appeal to facts and experience. The best understandings (if the most celebrated authors and philosophers possessed the best understandings) have remained unconvinced by the outward testimony; while the meanest have been fully persuaded by the cooperation of the inward, the divine irradiation of the Holy Ghost shining upon and giving lustre to the letter of revelation.

But because the doctrine of divine influence on the human mind is obnoxious to obloquy,* I think it necessary to support it by the authority of some of the best men and soundest divines of this nation. Such are the prejudices entertained by many against the doctrine of divine influence and the witness of the Spirit, that I cannot proceed one step farther, with hope of success, till I have laid before my reader many passages in confirmation of it, from the writings of men who were the ornaments of their times, and who are at this day esteemed no less for their orthodoxy and powers of reasoning than their eloquence. I make no apology to my reader for the

* During the greater part of this century the philosophers on the Continent, and their imitators in our own island, have been explaining away every thing mysterious in Christianity, and branding all those who maintain the pure doctrine of the gospel with the stigma of fanaticism. And of late, men pretending to sincerity in religious matters have adopted the title of rational Christians, and as a proof of their rationality, denied the divinity of the second and third persons in the Holy Trinity. By some strange neglect, these men have been permitted for many years to direct the public in the choice of books, not only in science and polite literature, but also in Christian theology.

length of the quotations from them, because I am sure he will be a gainer, if I keep silence that they may be heard in the interval. My object is to re-establish a declining opinion, which I think not only true, but of prime importance. I therefore withdraw myself occasionally, that I may introduce those advocates for it, whose very names must command attention. If I can but be instrumental in reviving the true Spirit of Christianity, by citing their authority, theirs be the praise, and mine the humble office of recommending and extending their salutary doctrine.

"And if it shall be asked (to express myself nearly in the words of Archbishop Wake) why in this volume I so often choose the drudgery of a transcriber,* the reason is shortly this: I hoped that quotations from departed writers of great and deserved fame would find a more general and unprejudiced acceptance with all sorts of men, than any thing that could be written by any one now living, who, if esteemed by some, is yet in danger of being despised by more; whose prejudice to his person will not suffer them to reap any benefit by any thing, however useful, that can come from him; while such passages as these which I quote must excite respect and attention, unmixed (as the authors are dead) with any malignant sentiment or prepossession against their persons, such as might close the eyes of the understanding against the radiance of truth."

My object in this work was not the acquisition or the increase of literary fame, but solely the promotion of Faith, Hope, and Charity.

"This was the motive (to proceed with the words

* The Archbishop is apologizing for undertaking the work of translation instead of original composition.

of Wake) that first induced me to set about this work; in the execution of which, should I chance to be mistaken, yet I cannot but persuade myself that the honesty of my intentions will excuse me to all indifferent persons. Let others, then, to whom God has given better opportunities and greater abilities, serve the church in better and higher performances. It shall suffice me in my way to minister to the souls of men; and if by this present undertaking I shall but in any measure have contributed to the reviving a true sense of piety and devotion among us, I shall heartily bless God, both that he first prompted me to undertake this invidious task, and has since enabled me, though amidst many infirmities, to go through with it."*

* The following text may, I think, confirm the opinion advanced in this Section, that the best evidence will arise from obedience :

"And we are his witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him." Acts, v. 32.

"If a man will love me and keep my words, my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." John, xiv. 23.

Preventing grace or common grace, as the theologists express themselves, will, if sufficiently attended to, lead to such obedience as will cause special grace.

"Common grace, which is not suspended upon the performance of any condition required in the covenant, is given to all those that live under the ministration of the gospel. My meaning is, they are all prevented, with that grace, which makes it possible for them to begin well." CLAGETT.

Such a degree of obedience, therefore, as secures in future special grace, is practicable by those who are but very imperfect Christians. Prayer added, as a branch of obedience, will produce special grace.

SECTION III.

On the Prejudices entertained against this sort of Evidence, and against all divine and supernatural Influence on the Mind of Man.

SINCE the time of Archbishop Laud, the most celebrated defenders of Christianity have thought it proper to expatiate, with peculiar zeal, on the excellence of natural religion. They probably had, what they thought, prudential reasons for their conduct; but it must not be dissembled, that in extolling natural religion they have appeared to depreciate or supersede revelation. The doctrine of supernatural assistance, the great privilege and glory of Christianity, has been very little enforced by them, and indeed rather discountenanced, as favouring of enthusiasm, and claiming, if true, a decided superiority over their favourite religion of nature.

Upon this subject, a very sensible writer thus expresses his opinion:

"Towards making and forming a Christian, if supernatural assistance of the divine Spirit was necessary at the beginning of the gospel, I do not see what should render it less necessary at any time since, nor why it may not be expected NOW. Human learning and human wisdom have rashly and vainly usurped the place of it.

"It is observable that these old principles are still to be found among dissenters, in a good measure, which is the reason why their opponents have dropped the use of them.

"As these doctrines were the principles and language of the dissenters, and others, who followed the standard of the Parliament against King Charles the First, though they were not the particular motives

of the war, nor could contract any just blame from the unhappy issue of that war; yet, at the restora- of King Charles the Second, the resentment which took place against the persons of the dissenters, and ran high, I apprehend, led the church clergy not only to be angry with the men, but to forsake their principles too, though right and innocent in themselves, and aforetime held in common among all Protestants."

This, the author thinks, gave rise to the excessive zeal for enforcing natural religion, and for mere moral preaching, to the exclusion of the distinguishing doctrines of Christ, and particularly those sublime mysteries respecting the operation of the Holy Ghost, the very life and soul of Christianity.

"Every thing," says he, "besides morality began, from that time, to be branded with the odious term of enthusiasm and hypocrisy."

"That the cause of religion (observes the same writer) has declined for many years, every person appears sensible. Among the various reasons assigned for it, the principal, in my opinion, is, that the established ministers have suffered it to die in their own hands, by departing from the old method of preaching, and from their first and original tenets; which has given countenance to what is called natural religion, in such a measure, as to shut out revealed religion and supersede the gospel."

"It is in vain to cry out against deists and infidels, when the Protestant watchmen have deserted their posts, and themselves have opened a gap for the enemy. Learning and oratory, it must be owned, are arrived at great perfection, but our true old divinity is gone. Amid these splendid trifles, the gospel is really lost." *

* See a letter signed Paulinus, published in 1735.

It is certain that the profligate court of Charles the Second, in its endeavours to discredit the dissenters, many of whom were admirable scholars and divines, as well as holy and exemplary men in private life, contributed much to explode all doctrines concerning the SPIRIT. Unfortunately those clergymen who wished to be favoured at court, too easily conformed their doctrines to its wishes; and arguments from the pulpit united with sarcasms from the seat of the scorner, to render all who maintained the doctrine of grace suspected of enthusiasm and hypocrisy. Ridicule, in the hands of the author of Hudibras, though intended only to serve political purposes, became a weapon that wounded religion in its vitals.

The sect of Christians denominated Quakers certainly entertained many right notions respecting divine influence: and therefore, as the Quakers were disliked by the church, the doctrines which they maintained were to be treated with contempt. The SPIRIT, whose operations they justly maintained, became, under the direction of worldly policy, a word of reproach to them, and to all preachers who earnestly enforced similar opinions. Consequently aspiring clergymen of the church, wishing to avoid every doctrine which could retard their advancement, or fix a stigma of heterodoxy upon them, were very little inclined to preach the reality or necessity of divine influence. They feared the opprobrious names of enthusiasts or hypocrites, and so in effect became ashamed of the gospel of Christ.*

* "To improve the people effectually, you must be assiduous in teaching the principles of the gospel; and of the gospel, not as almost explained away by modern refiners, but as the truth is in Jesus, as it is taught by the church, of which you are members, and as you have engaged, by your subscriptions and declarations,

In process of time, arose the sect of the Methodists; who, however they may be mistaken in some points, are certainly orthodox in their opinions of the divine agency on the human soul. They found it in the Scriptures, in the Liturgy, in the Articles, and they preached it with a zeal which to many appeared intemperate, and certainly was sometimes too little guided by discretion. The consequence was, that the spiritual doctrines, already vilified by the court of Charles the Second, and by the adversaries of the Quakers, became objects of general dislike and derision.

In the meantime, the gospel of Jesus Christ suffered by its professed friends as well as declared enemies. Regular divines, of great virtue, learning, and apparent piety, feared to preach the Holy Ghost and his operations, the main doctrine of the gospel, lest they should countenance the Puritan, the Quaker, or the Methodist, and lose the esteem of their own order, or of the higher powers. They often contented themselves, during a long life, with preaching morality only; which, without the spirit of Christianity, is like a beautiful statue from the hand of a sculptor; however graceful its symmetry and polished its materials, yet wanting the breath of life, it is still but a block of marble.

These prejudices remaining at this day, I have thought it right to recommend the sort of evidence

that you will teach it yourselves. You must set forth the original corruption of our nature, and our sanctification by the influences of the Divine Spirit.

"The truth, I fear is, that many, if not most of us, have dwelt too little on these doctrines in our sermons, partly from not having studied theology deeply enough to treat them ably and beneficially: God grant it may never have been for want of inwardly experiencing their importance!" Archbishop Secker's first Charge to his Clergy.

which this book attempts to display, by citing the authority of great divines, who, uninfluenced by secular hopes or fears, have borne witness to the truth as it is in Jesus. They are among the most celebrated theologists of this nation; and such as few among living or recent writers will presume to vie with, in extent of knowledge, in power of expression, and zeal for Christianity.

Bitter is the anger of critics and controversialists in divinity. Arrows dipt in venom are usually hurled at every writer, who ventures to recommend a doctrine which they, from party motives, disapprove. I must seek shelter from their darts under the shields of such men as Bishop Taylor, Doctor Isaac Barrow, and others,* in and out of the establishment, who fought a good fight and kept the faith, having no regard to worldly and sinister motives, but faithfully endeavouring to lead those, over whom they were appointed guides, by the radiance of gospel light, from the shadowy mazes of error into the pleasant paths of piety and peace.

Whatever obloquy may follow the teaching of such doctrine, I shall incur it with alacrity, because I believe it to be the truth, and that the happiness of human nature is highly concerned in its general reception. I will humbly say, therefore, with St. Paul, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ Jesus, for it is the power of God unto salvation."†

And as to those who deny the doctrine of divine influence, I fear they are guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. I speak diffidently, as it becomes every mortal, on a subject so momentous; but let

* Leaders of the people, by their counsels and by their knowledge of learning, meet for the people, wise and eloquent in their instructions. Ecclus. xliv. 4.

† Rom. i. 16.

those who are eager to deny and even deride the doctrine, consider duly what is meant by the sin against the Holy Ghost, and let them remember this tremendous declaration of our Saviour himself, that BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST SHALL NOT BE FORGIVEN.* All other sins, we are expressly told, may be remitted, but on this the gates of mercy are closed. The denial of the Spirit's energy renders the gospel of no effect, extinguishes the living light of Jesus Christ, and involves wretched mortals in the darkness and death of Adam, fallen from the state of primitive perfection. It is represented as the greatest of all sins, because, in fact, it is productive of the greatest misery, defeating the benevolent purposes of a merciful Redeemer, and throwing back with ingratitude God's best gift to man.

SECTION IV.

The proper Evidence of the Christian Religion is the Illumination of the Holy Ghost, shining into the Hearts of those who do not close them against its Entrance. The Opinion of Dr. Gloucester Ridley,† cited in Confirmation of this Doctrine.

NONE, says St. Paul, can say JESUS IS THE LORD, but by the HOLY GHOST.‡ If, then, St. Paul be allowed to have understood the Christian religion, it is certain, that mere human testimony will never convince the infidel, and produce that faith which constitutes the true Christian. Our theological libraries might be cleared of more than half their volumes, if men, seeking the evidence of Christianity, would be

* Matt. xii. 31.

† Dr. Ridley was a scholar and divine of distinguished character. His sermons on the Holy Ghost are well worth the attention of all who would understand the essentials of Christianity.

‡ 1 Cor. xii. 3.

satisfied with the declaration of St. Paul, and the great Author of our religion.

There is a faith very common in the world, which teaches to believe, as an historical fact, that a person of the name of Jesus, a very good man, did live on earth, and that he preached and taught, under the direction of God or divine Providence, an excellent system of morality; such as, if duly observed, would contribute to their happiness, and recommend them to divine favour. But this kind of faith is not the right faith; it believes not enough, it is not given by the Holy Ghost; for he, in whom God dwelleth, confesseth that Jesus is the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world;* but they who acknowledge Jesus only as a good man teaching morality, know him not as a SAVIOUR. Socrates taught fine morality; and so did Seneca, Epictetus, and many more; but they had not and could not teach the knowledge which leadeth to salvation.

Having premised thus much, I now begin the citation of my authorities, all of which I entreat my reader to consider with the attention which they deserve.

"Illuminating grace," says Dr. Gloucester Ridley, "consists not in the assent we give to the history of the gospel, as a narration of matters of fact, sufficiently supported by human evidence; for this may be purely the effect of our study and learning. The collating of copies, the consulting of history, the comparing the assertions of friends, and the concessions of enemies, may necessitate† such a belief, a faith

* 1 John, iv. 13, 14, 15.

† Πιστις ουκ ἡ γεωμετρικαις αναγκαις, αγγ' η ταις του πνευματος ενεργειαις εγγινομεη. BASIL in *Psal.* 195.—The right faith is not that which is FORCED by mathematical demonstration, whether we will or not; but that which grows in the mind from the operation or energies of the Spirit.

which the devils may have, and doubtless have it. This sort of faith is an acquisition of our own, and not a gift. But faith is the gift of God."

"There may be a faith," continues Dr. Ridley, "which is not the work of the Spirit in our hearts, but entirely the effect of human means, our natural faculties assisted by languages, antiquities, manuscripts, criticism, and the like, without any divine aid, except the bare letter of the revelation; and as this faith may rise out of human abilities, so may it be attended with pride in our supposed accomplishments, envy of others superior skill, and bitter strife against those who mistake or oppose such truths; and is therefore no manifestation of that Spirit which resisteth the proud, and dispenses its graces only to the humble. This wisdom descendeth not from above. But the true saving faith, at the same time that it informs the understanding, influences the will and affections; it enlightens the eyes of the heart,* says the Apostle; it is there, in the heart, that the Christian man believeth; and if *thou believest with thine* HEART, *thou shalt be saved;*† while infidelity proceedeth from an averseness of our affections—*from an evil heart of unbelief.*"‡

Is it not therefore strange, that learned apologists, well acquainted with Scripture, after reading these strong declarations, that the heart must be impressed before saving faith can be fixed in it, should studiously avoid every topic which addresses itself to the affections, and coldly apply themselves to the understanding alone, in a language and manner like those

* Πεφωτισμενους τους οφθαλμους της καρδιας. Ephesians, i. 18.—Enlightening the eyes of the HEART. Almost all the old MSS. read καρδιας, and not διανοιας, as it stands in our printed copies. See Mill's Lectiones Variantes. RIDLEY.

† Rom. x. 9.

‡ Heb. iii. 12.

of a mathematical lecturer solving a problem of Euclid?*

Infidelity is increasing, and will continue to increase, so long as divines decline the means of conversion and persuasion which the Scriptures of the New Testament declare to be the only effectual means; so long as they have recourse to human reason and human learning alone, in which they will always find opponents very powerful. The Lord opened the heart of Lydia,† and then she attended to the things which were spoken of Paul. The Lord opens the hearts of all men at some period of their lives; but the vanity of the world, the cares of gain, the pride of life, shut them again, and reject the Holy Ghost. It is the business of divines to dispose those who are thus unfortunate and unwise, to be ready to receive the divine guest, should he again knock at the door of their hearts; but in doing this, they must preach the true gospel, which is not a system of mere morality or philosophy, but the sublime doctrine of grace.‡

* Many worthy and ingenious divines have spent the best years of their youth in the study of mathematics, logic, and metaphysics; and when they go forth from the academic shade, to instruct the people, still retaining their early habits, they give lectures in the pulpit on divinity, to villagers, mechanics, and tradesmen, in a style similar to that of an university professor talking of angles and triangles, moods and figures. The poor Fishermen of Galilee would not have known what to make of Christianity, thus disguised by scholastic language and refinement.

† Acts, xvi. 14.

‡ It must be taught *mediatè per verbum, immediatè per Spiritum.*—Mediately by the word; immediately by the Spirit.

SECTION V.

The true and only convincing Evidence of the Religion of Christ, or the Illumination of the Holy Ghost, is offered to ALL. *Historical Evidence and Argumentation adapted to few.*

FROM the eternal Fountain of light, both natural and spiritual, there streams a light *which lighteth every one that cometh into the world.* Whoever loves that which is good, and just, and true, and desires to act a virtuous part in the place allotted to him in this world, whether high or low, may be assured of the blessing of heaven, displaying itself not perhaps in worldly riches or honours, but in something infinitely more valuable—a secret influence upon his heart and understanding, to direct his conduct, to improve his nature, and to lead him, though in the lowly vale, yet along the path of peace.

The nature of all men was depraved by the fall of Adam. The assistance of God's Holy Spirit was withdrawn. Christ came to restore that nature, and to bring down that assistance, and leave it as a GIFT to all mankind at his departure.*

In Adam all die, says St. Paul, but in Christ shall all be made alive. That is, in Adam all die a spiritual death, or lose the Paraclete, and the particle of the divine nature, which was bestowed on man on his creation; and in Christ all are made alive, spiritually alive, or rendered capable (if they do not voluntarily choose darkness rather than light) of the divine illumination of the Holy Ghost. The film is

* It does not appear (says Bishop Clayton) either in the Old or New Testament, that the Logos had any power over the Holy Spirit till after his Ascension. "When all power was given unto him, both in heaven and earth." Matthew, xxviii. 18, 19. "The Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." John, vii. 39.—But the Holy Ghost undoubtedly operated under God's direction, from the beginning.

taken from the eyes of all; but let us remember that the eye-lids remain, which may be closed by voluntary connivance, or by wicked presumption.

"I will pour out my SPIRIT upon ALL flesh."*

"The grace which bringeth salvation hath appeared unto ALL men."—"This is the light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."—"It is his will, that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth."—"Christ came to save sinners;" (and all men, both Jews and Gentiles, are under sin.)—"Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden."—"He has propitiated for the sins of the whole world. His grace has been openly offered to all men in the gospel."†

These passages, which no sophistry can elude, are sufficient to prove that the internal evidence of the gospel has a great advantage over the external, in the circumstance of its universality. All may be convinced by it who are willing.‡ But can this be said of dry, logical, systematic testimonies, which require learning, sagacity, and time, to be comprehended? Such testimonies are fit for few, and appear unlikely to produce vital religion in any. They serve men to talk about, they furnish occasion for a war of words;§ but they leave the heart unaffected. Neither Jesus Christ nor his Apostles thought proper to address men systematically. And are critics, linguists, and logicians wiser than the Author of their religion, and better informed than his Apostles?

The word of God is like a two-edged sword, in-

* Joel, ii. 28.

† 1 Tim. ii. 4. 1 Tim. i. 15. Rom. iii. 9. Matt. xi. 28. 1 John, ii. 2. Tit. ii. 11.

‡ Η μεν γαρ χαρις εις ΠΑΝΤΑΣ εκκεχυται. CHRYSOSTO *in Joan. Hom.—For grace indeed is poured out upon* ALL.

§ "DISPUTATION," says Bishop Taylor, "cures no vice, but kindles a great many; and though men esteem it learning, yet it is the most useless learning in the world."

vincible where it is properly used; but the word of man is comparatively a feeble weapon, without point or edge. The word of man alone, though adorned with all eloquence, learning, and logical subtilty, will never disseminate the true gospel, or stop the progress of unbelief. The word of God, rightly explained, so as to administer grace to the hearers and readers, will still preserve and extend Christianity, as it has hitherto done, notwithstanding all the opposition of the world, and those unfeeling children of it, whose hearts are hardened and understandings darkened by the pride of life. If, therefore, as St. James advises, any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. The wisdom here meant is not worldly prudence, or ostentatious philosophy, but that which maketh wise unto salvation; and certainly cannot be found in the cold didactic writings of those who rely entirely on their own reason, and deny or explain away the doctrine of grace.

Grace is the living gospel. Perishable paper, pens, ink, and printer's types, can never supersede the daily, hourly operation of the omniscient and omnipotent Creator and Preserver of the universe.

Let us remember, "that to every man is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal;"* but that to every man are by no means given genius and learning, or faculties to understand the proofs of Christianity, published by mathematicians, by logicians, and by deeply learned speculatists in ethics and metaphysics.

Mr. Paine, in his attack on Christianity, sums up all his objections at the close. The first and greatest is this, and I give it in his own words, though it is contrary to my practice, and opinion of propriety,

* 1 Cor. xii. 7.

often to cite the cavils of unbelievers: "The idea or belief of a word of God existing in print, or in writing, or in speech, is inconsistent with itself, for reasons already assigned. These reasons, among many others, are the want of an universal language; the mutability of language; the errors to which translations are subject; the possibility of totally suppressing such a word; the probability of altering it, or of fabricating the whole, and imposing it upon the world."

Now these objections cannot possibly be made to the evidence of the Spirit of God, the manifestation of the Spirit given to every man; because the Spirit speaks an universal language, addressing itself to the feelings of the heart, which are nearly the same in all countries, whatever sounds are uttered by the tongue; because its language (thus spoken to the heart) is not subject to the mutability of human dialects; because it is far removed from the possibility of misrepresentation by translators; because it cannot be totally suppressed; because it cannot be altered; because it cannot be fabricated or imposed on the world; because it is an emanation from the God of truth, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. This evidence sheds its light all over the Christian world, and is seen, like the sun in the heavens, by all who use their visual powers, unobstructed by self-raised clouds of anger, envy, pride, prejudice, vicious morals, and false philosophy.*

* No man can be convinced, well and wisely, of the holy, blessed, and undivided Trinity; but he that FEELS the mightiness of the FATHER begetting him to a new life, the wisdom of the Son building him up in a most holy faith, and the love of the Spirit of God making him to become like unto God. Bishop TAYLOR.

SECTION VI.

Opinions of Bishop Taylor respecting the Evidence of the Holy Spirit; "Showing" (as he expresses it) "how the Scholars of the University shall become most LEARNED *and most* USEFUL."

I PROCEED to cite the authority of the celebrated Jeremy Taylor, a man who stands among the divines of England like Shakspeare among the poets, in proud preeminence. The haughtiness of learning may take offence at the following passage; but let it be in justice to the author considered, that he could not decry learning from a consciousness of wanting it, for who, among the cavillers of the day, will be allowed to claim an equality in learning with Jeremy Taylor? Let no man think it a disgrace to be censured by the rational Christians in company with the writer of the "Ductor dubitantium," and many other works abounding in deep learning, strict reasoning, as well as in the most affectionate piety.

"We have examined," says he, "all ways, in our inquiries after religious truth, but one; all but God's way.* Let us, having missed in all the other, try this. Let us go to God for truth; for truth comes from God only. If we miss the truth, it is because we will not find it; for certain it is, that all the truth which God hath made NECESSARY, he hath also made legible and plain; and if we will open our eyes we shall see the sun, and if *we will walk in the light, we shall rejoice in the light.* Only let us withdraw the curtains, let us remove the impediments, and

* See Bishop Taylor's VIA *Intelligentiæ,* in his folio volume of Sermons, 1668.

the sin that doth so easily beset us. That is God's way. Every man must, in his station, do that portion of duty which God requires of him; and then he shall BE TAUGHT OF GOD all that is fit for him to learn; there *is no other way for him but this.* The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and a good understanding have all they that do thereafter. And so said David of himself: *I have more understanding than my teachers; because I keep thy commandments.* And this is the only way which Christ has taught us. If you ask, what is truth? you must not do as Pilate did, ask the question, and then go away from him that only can give you an answer; for as God is the Author of truth, so he is the TEACHER of it, and the way to learn is this; for so saith our blessed Lord; If any man will do his will, he *shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God or no.*

"This text is simple as truth itself, but greatly comprehensive, and contains a truth that alone will enable you to understand all mysteries, and to expound all prophecies, and to interpret all Scriptures, and to search into all secrets, all, I mean, which concern our happiness and our duty. It is plainly to be resolved into this proposition:

"The way to judge of religion is by doing our duty; and theology is rather a divine life than a divine knowledge.

"In heaven indeed we shall first see and then love; but here on earth we must first love, and love will open our eyes as well as our hearts, and we shall then see and perceive and understand.

"Every man understands more of religion by his affections than by his reason. It is not the wit of the man, but the spirit of the man; not so much his head as his heart that learns the divine philosophy.

"There is in every righteous man a new vital

principle. The spirit of grace is the spirit of wisdom, and teaches us by secret inspirations, by proper arguments, by actual persuasions, by personal application, by effects and energies; and as the soul of man is the cause of all his vital operations, so is the Spirit of God the life of that life, and the cause of all actions and productions spiritual; and the consequence of this is what St. John tells us of; *Ye have received the* UNCTION *from above, and that anointing teacheth you all things*—all things of some one kind; that is, certainly all things that pertain to life and Godliness; all that by which a man is wise and happy. Unless the soul have a new life put into it, unless there be a vital principle within, unless the Spirit of life be the informer of the spirit of the man, the word of God will be as dead in the operation as the body in its powers and possibilities.

"God's Spirit does not destroy reason, but heightens it. God opens the heart and creates a new one; and without this creation, this new principle of life, we may hear the word of God, but we can never understand it; we hear the sound, but are never the better. Unless there be in our hearts a secret conviction by the Spirit of God, the gospel itself is a dead letter.

"Do we not see this by daily experience? Even those things which a good man and an evil man KNOW, they do not know both alike. An evil man knows that God is lovely, and that sin is of an evil and destructive nature, and when he is reproved he is convinced; and when he is observed, he is ashamed; and when he has done, he is unsatisfied; and when he pursues his sin, he does it in the dark. Tell him he shall die, and he sighs deeply, but he knows it as well as you. Proceed, and say that after death comes judgment, and the poor man be-

lieves and trembles; and yet, after all this, he runs to commit his sin with as certain an event and resolution as if he knew no argument against it.

"Now since, at the same time, we see other persons, not so learned, it may be, not so much versed in the Scriptures, yet they say a thing is good and lay hold of it. They believe glorious things of heaven, and they live accordingly, as men that believe themselves. What is the reason of this difference? They both read the Scriptures; they read and hear the same sermons; they have capable understandings; they both believe what they hear and what they read; and yet the event is vastly different. The reason is that which I am now speaking of: the one understands by one principle, the other by another; the one understands by nature, the other by grace; the one by human learning, the other by divine; the one reads the Scriptures without, and the other within; the one understands as a son of man, the other as a son of God; the one perceives by the proportions of the world, the other by the measures of the Spirit; the one understands by reason, the other by love; and therefore he does not only understand the sermons of the Spirit and perceive their meaning, but he pierces deeper, and knows the meaning of that meaning; that is, the secret of the Spirit, that which is spiritually discerned, that which gives life to the proposition and activity to the soul. And the reason is, that he hath a divine principle within him and a new understanding; that is plainly, he hath love, and that is more than knowledge, as was rarely well observed by St. Paul. Knowledge puffeth up; but charity edifieth;* that is, charity maketh the best scholars. No sermons can build you up a holy building to God, unless the love of God be in your

* Αγαπη—Love of God.

hearts, and purify your souls from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit.

"A good life is the best way to understand wisdom and religion, because, by the experiences and relishes of religion, there is conveyed to them a sweetness to which all wicked men are strangers. There is in the things of God, to those who practise them, a deliciousness that makes us love them, and that love admits us into God's cabinet, and strangely clarifies the understanding by the purification of the heart. For when our reason is raised up by the Spirit of Christ, it is turned quickly into experience; when our faith relies upon the principles of Christ, it is changed into vision; and so long as we know God only in the ways of men, by contentious learning, by arguing and dispute, we see nothing but the shadow of him, and in that shadow we meet with many dark appearances, little certainty, and much conjecture; but when we know him λογῳ αποφαντικῳ, γαληνῃ νοερᾳ with the eyes of holiness and the instruction of gracious experiences, with a quiet spirit and the peace of enjoyment, then we shall hear what we never heard, and see what our eyes never saw; then the mysteries of Godliness shall be open unto us, and clear as the windows of the morning; and this is rarely well expressed by the Apostle. 'If we stand up from the dead and awake from sleep, then Christ shall give us LIGHT.'

"For though the Scriptures themselves are written by the Spirit of God, yet they are written within and without; and besides the light that shines upon the face of them, unless there be a light shining within our hearts, unfolding the leaves, and interpreting the mysterious sense of the Spirit, convincing our consciences and preaching to our hearts; to look for Christ in the leaves of the gospel, is to look for

the living among the dead. There is a life in them; but that life is, according to St. Paul's expression, hid with Christ in God, and unless the Spirit of God draw it forth, we shall not be able.

"Human learning brings excellent ministeries towards this; it is admirably useful for the reproof of heresies, for the detection of fallacies, for the letter of the Scriptures, for collateral testimonies, for exterior advantages; but there is something beyond this, that human learning without the addition of divine can never reach.

"A good man, though unlearned in secular knowledge, is like the windows of the temple, narrow without and broad within; he sees not so much of what profits not abroad, but whatsoever is within, and concerns religion and the glorifications of God, that he sees with a broad inspection, but all human learning without God is but blindness and folly. One man discourses of the sacrament, another receives Christ; one discourses for or against transubstantiation; but the good man feels himself to be changed, and so joined to Christ, that he only understands the true sense of transubstantiation, while he becomes to Christ bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh, and of the same spirit with his Lord.

"From holiness we have the best instruction. For that which we are taught by the Holy Spirit of God, this new nature, this vital principle within us, it is that which is worth our learning: not vain and empty, idle and insignificant notions, in which, when you have laboured till your eyes are fixed in their orbs, and your flesh unfixed from its bones, you are no better and no wiser. If the Spirit of God be your teacher, he will teach you such truths as will make you know and love God, and become like to

him, and enjoy him for ever, by passing from similitude to union and eternal fruition.

"Too many scholars have lived upon air and empty notions for many ages past, and troubled themselves with tying and untying knots, like hypochondriacs in a fit of melancholy, thinking of nothings, and troubling themselves with nothings, and falling out about nothings, and being very wise and very learned in things that are not, and work not, and were never planted in Paradise by the finger of God. If the Spirit of God be our teacher, we shall learn to avoid evil and to do good, to be wise and to be holy, to be profitable and careful; and they that walk in this way shall find more peace in their consciences, MORE SKILL IN THE SCRIPTURES, more satisfaction in their doubts, than can be obtained by all the polemical and impertinent disputations of the world. The man that is wise, he that is conducted by the Spirit of God, knows better in what Christ's kingdom doth consist than to throw away his time and interest, his peace and safety, for what? for religion? no: for the body of religion? not so much: for the garment of the body of religion? no, not for so much; but for the fringes of the garment of the body of religion; for such, and no better, are many religious disputes; things, or rather circumstances and manners of things, in which the soul and spirit are not at all concerned. The knowledge which comes from Godliness is θειοτερον τι πασης αποδειξεως, something more certain and divine than all demonstration and human learning.

"And now to conclude:—to you I speak, fathers and brethren, you who are or intend to be of the clergy; you see here the best compendium of your studies, the best alleviation of your labours, the

truest method of wisdom. It is not by reading multitudes of books, but by studying the truth of God; it is not by laborious commentaries of the doctors that you can finish your work, but the exposition of the Spirit of God; it is not by the rules of metaphysics, but by the proportions of holiness; and when all books are read, and all arguments examined, and all authorities alleged, nothing can be found to be true that is UNHOLY. The learning of the fathers was more owing to their piety than their skill, more to God than to themselves. These were the men that prevailed against error, because they lived according to truth. If ye walk in light, and live in the spirit, your doctrines will be true, and that truth will prevail.

"I pray God to give you all grace to follow this wisdom, to study this learning, to labour for the understanding of Godliness; so your time and your studies, your persons and your labours, will be holy and useful, sanctified and blessed, beneficial to men and pleasing to God, through him who is the wisdom of the Father, who is made to all that love him, wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption."

Thus far Bishop Taylor; and will any one among our living theologists controvert the merits of Bishop Taylor? Is there one among them whom the public judgment will place in the same rank with him? Will any one stigmatize him as an ignorant enthusiast? His strength of understanding and powers of reasoning, as well as eloquence, are strikingly exhibited in his sermons, in his *Liberty of prophesying*, and in his polemical writings. I must conclude, that he understood the Christian religion better than most of the sons of men; because, to admirable abilities and erudition, he united the finest feelings

of devotion. His authority must have weight with all serious and humble inquirers into the subject of Christianity, and his authority strongly and repeatedly inculcates the opinion which I wish to maintain, that the best evidence of the truth of our religion is derived from the operation of the Holy Spirit on every heart which is duly disposed and prepared to receive it. Let his words be remembered: "*unless there be in our hearts a secret conviction by the Spirit of God, the gospel itself is a dead letter.*"

And I wish it to be duly attended to, that the discourse from which the above extracts are made, was not addressed to a popular assembly, but to the clergy of an university, and at a solemn visitation. The Bishop evidently wished that the doctrines which he taught might be disseminated among the people by the parochial clergy. They were disseminated; and in consequence of such doctrines, Christianity flourished. They must be again disseminated by men having authority, and all the parochial clergy, if they sincerely wish to check the progress of infidelity. The minds of men must be impressed with the sense of an influential divinity in the Christian religion, or they will reject it for the morality of Socrates, Seneca, the modern philosophers, and all those plausible reasoners, to whom this world and the things which are seen are the chief objects of attention.

The old divines taught and preached with wonderful efficacy, because they spoke as men having authority from the Holy Ghost, and not as the disputers of this world, proud of a little science, acquired from heathen writers in the cloisters of an academy. There was a celestial glory diffused round the pulpits of the old divines; and the hearers, struck with veneration, listened to the preacher as to an undoubted oracle. Full of grace were his lips;

and moral truth was beautifully illuminated by divine. She easily won and firmly fixed the affections of men, clothed, as she was, with light as with a garment.

SECTION VII.

*Passages from the celebrated Mr. John Smith, Fellow of Queen's College, Cambridge, corroborative of the Opinion that the best Evidence of the Christian Religion arises from the Energy of the Holy Spirit.**

MINUTE philosophers and minute critics, deriving all their stock of learning from the superficial imitators of Voltaire and Rousseau, entertain no adequate idea of the merit of our old divines, who drew their wisdom from the pure fountain of the Scriptures, and learned their philosophy from the schools of Greece or Rome. Such persons, from the deficiency of their knowledge, are inadequate judges of the merit of men like him from whom is taken the following quotation; and it is no wonder that they stigmatize them with the appellation of visionaries or fanatics. But with persons of true learning and good minds, I have no doubt but that the opinions of this profoundly learned author and virtuous man will have great weight. His style may be a little antiquated, like that of Bishop Taylor; yet, it abounds with beauty, and must please all whose reading is not confined to modern pamphlets and French literature.

"Divine truth is not to be discerned so much in a man's brain as in his heart. There is a divine and spiritual sense which alone is able to converse internally with the life and soul of divine truth, as mixing and uniting itself with it; while vulgar minds behold only the body and outside of it. Though in

* See his Select Discourses, published in 1656.

itself it be most intelligible, and such as the human mind may most easily apprehend, yet there is an incrustation, as the Hebrew writers call it,* upon all corrupt minds, which hinders the lively taste and relish of it.

"The best acquaintance with religion is a knowledge taught of God:† it is a light which descends from heaven, which alone is able to guide and conduct the souls of men to that heaven whence it comes. The Christian religion is an influx from God upon the minds of good men; and the great design of the gospel is to unite human nature to divinity.

"The gospel is a mighty efflux and emanation of life and spirit, freely issuing forth from an omnipotent source of grace and love; that godlike, vital influence, by which the Divinity derives itself into the souls of men, enlivening and transforming them into its own likeness, and strongly imprinting upon them a copy of its own beauty and goodness: like the spiritual virtue of the heavens, which spreads itself freely upon the lower world, and subtilely insinuating itself into this benumbed, feeble, earthly matter, begets life and motion in it: briefly, it is that whereby God comes to dwell in us, and we in him.

"The Apostle calls the law the ministration of the letter and of death, it being in itself but a dead letter, as all that which is without a man's soul must be; but on the other side, he calls the gospel, because of the intrinsical and vital administration of it in living impressions upon the souls of men, the *ministration of the spirit*, and the *ministration of righteousness*; by which he cannot mean the history of the gospel, or those credenda propounded to us to believe; for this would make the gospel itself as much

* *Incrustamentum immunditiei*—An incrustation of filth.

† Θεοδιδακτος γνωσις.

an external thing as the law was; and so we see that the preaching of Christ crucified was to the Jews a *stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness.* But indeed he means a vital efflux from God upon the souls of men, whereby they are made partakers of life and strength from him.

"Though the history and outward communication of the gospel to us *in scriptis* is to be always acknowledged as a special mercy and advantage, and certainly no less privilege to the Christians than it was to the Jews, to be the depositaries of the oracles of God, yet it is plain that the Apostle, where he compares the law and the gospel, means something which is more than a piece of book-learning, or an historical narration of the free love of God, in the several contrivances of it for the redemption of mankind.

"The evangelical or new law is an efflux of life and power from God himself, the original of life and power, and produceth life wherever it comes; and to this double dispensation of law and gospel does St. Paul clearly refer 2 Cor. iii. 3. You are the epistle of Christ ministered by us, WRITTEN NOT WITH INK, but with THE SPIRIT OF THE LIVING GOD.—*Not in tables of stone*; which last words are a plain gloss upon that mundane kind of administering the law, in a mere external way, to which he opposeth the gospel.

"The gospel is not so much a system and body of saving divinity, as the spirit and vital influence of it spreading itself over all the powers of men's souls, and quickening them into a divine life; it is not so properly a doctrine that is wrapt up in ink and paper, as it is VITALIS SCIENTIA, a living impression made upon the soul and spirit. The gospel does not so much consist *in verbis* as *in virtute*;—in the written word, as in the internal energy."

He who wishes to have an adequate idea of this profound scholar and most excellent man, will find a pleasing account of him in Bishop Patrick's sermon at his funeral, subjoined to the SELECT DISCOURSES, which abound with beautiful passages, illustrative of the true Christian philosophy.

That I am not singular in thinking highly of *Smith's Select Discourses*, is clearly manifested from the circumstance of Bishop WATSON having inserted one of them in his Collection of Theological Tracts. The Bishop indeed expressly says, that all the Discourses of Smith are very valuable, and particularly that which he has selected, and which indeed was translated into Latin by Le Clerc, an excellent judge, and prefixed to his Commentary on Isaiah.

SECTION VIII.

The Opinion of Bishop Sanderson on the Impossibility of becoming a Christian without supernatural Assistance.

As the weight of the authorities which I adduce must be proportioned to the opinion the reader entertains of the men who furnish them, I think it right to say something of their characters; but most of them are so well known, that I should almost as soon think of pointing out the lustre of the day-star in the heavens, as of displaying in detail their splendid and acknowledged merits. But if any should be unacquainted with Bishop Sanderson's high renown, I must refer him to the life of the Bishop, most beautifully delineated by Isaac Walton. Suffice it to say, that it can never be suspected of Bishop Sanderson that his religious sentiments originated in imbecility of intellect; for he has proved himself the first logician

and acutest reasoner of his time. Vigour of understanding and clearness of conception were his characteristics. Let those who are inclined to despise his religious opinions, prove themselves competent to assume a superiority over him, by equalling his book of *Logic* and his *Cases of Conscience*.

"It was Simon Magus's error," says Bishop Sanderson, "to think that the gift of God might be purchased with money; and it hath a spice of his sin, and so may go for a kind of simony, to think that spiritual gifts may be purchased with labour. You may rise up early and go to bed late, and study hard, and read much, and devour the marrow of the best authors, and when you have done all, unless God give a blessing unto your endeavours, be as thin and meagre in regard of true and useful learning, as Pharaoh's lean kine were after they had eaten the fat ones.* It is God that both ministereth seed to the sower, and multiplieth the seed sown; the principal and the increase are both his.

"It is clear that all Christian virtues and graces, though wrought immediately by us, and with the free consent of our own wills, are yet the fruit of God's Spirit working in us. That is to say, they do not proceed originally from any strength of nature, or any inherent power in man's free-will; nor are they acquired by the culture of philosophy, the advantages of education, or any improvement whatsoever of natural abilities by the helps of art or industry: but are in truth the proper effects of that supernatural grace which is given unto us by the good pleasure of God the Father, merited for us by the precious blood of God the Son, and conveyed into our hearts by the sweet and secret inspirations of God the Holy Ghost. Love, joy, and peace are

* Genesis, xli. 21.

fruits, not at all of the flesh, but merely of the Spirit.

"All those very many passages in the New Testament which either set forth the unframableness of our nature to the doing of any thing that is good, *(not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think a good thought; in me, that is in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing;** and the like,) or else ascribe our best performances to the glory of the grace of God, (*without me you can do nothing. All our sufficiency is of God. Not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. It is God that worketh in you both the will and deed;*† and the like,) are so many clear confirmations of the truth. Upon the evidence of which truth it is that our mother the church hath taught us in the public service to beg at the hands of Almighty God that he would *endue us with the grace of his Holy Spirit, to amend our lives according to his holy word:* and again, (consonantly to the matter we are in hand with, almost *in terminis*,) that he would *give to all men increase of grace to hear meekly his word, and to receive it with pure affection, and to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit.* As without which grace it were not possible for us to amend our lives, or to bring forth such fruits, according as God requireth in his holy word.

"And the reason is clear: because as the tree is, such must the fruit be. Do men look to gather *grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?*‡ Or can they expect from a *salt fountain* other than brackish water? Certainly, what is born of flesh can be no better than flesh. Who can bring a clean thing out of that which is unclean?§ Or how can any thing

* 2 Cor. iii. 5. Romans, vii. 18.
† John, xv. 7. 2 Cor. iii. 5. Eph. ii. 8. Phil. ii. 13.
‡ Matt. vii. 16. § Job, xiv. 4.

that is good proceed from a heart, all the *imaginations of the thoughts whereof are only and continually evil?** If we would have the fruit good, reason will (and our Saviour prescribeth the same method) that order be taken, *first to make the tree good.*

"But you will say, it is as impossible so to alter the nature of the flesh as to make it bring forth good spiritual fruit; as it is to alter the nature of a crab or thorn, so as to make it bring forth a pleasant apple. Truly, and so it is: if you shall endeavour to mend the fruit by altering the stock, you shall find the labour altogether fruitless;—a crab will be a crab still, when you have done what you can: and you may as well hope to wash an Ethiopian white, as to purge the flesh from sinful pollution.

"The work therefore must be done quite another way: not by alteration, but addition. That is, leaving the old principle to remain as it was, by superinducing *ab extra* a new principle, of a different and more kindly quality. We see the experiment of it daily in the grafting of trees, a crabstock, if it have a cion of some delicate apple artfully grafted in it; look what branches are suffered to grow out of the stock itself, they will all follow the nature of the stock, and if they bring forth any fruit at all, it will be sour and styptic. But the fruit that groweth from the graft will be pleasant to the taste, because it followeth the nature of the graft. We read of λογος εμφυτος, an engrafted word. Our carnal hearts are the old stock; which, before the word of God be grafted in it, cannot bring forth any spiritual fruit acceptable to God: but when, by the powerful operation of his Holy Spirit, the word which we hear with our outward ears is inwardly grafted therein, it then bringeth forth the fruit of good

* Gen. vi. 5.

living. So that all the bad fruits that appear in our lives come from the old stock, the flesh: and if there be any good fruit of the Spirit in us, it is from the virtue of that word of grace that is grafted in us."

What modern philosopher or divine can rival Bishop Sanderson? His *Prælectiones* rank him with Aristotle: his piety, with the chief of the apostles. Yet there is little doubt but that many a critic, whose attainments would not qualify him even to read his Latin works, would condemn his divinity, if it were now first published, as weak and fanatical. But let us beware of being misled in the most important matters, by the arrogant decisions of superficial men filling up the mighty void of sense and solid learning, with self-conceit and a malignant spirit of detraction.

SECTION IX.

Dr. Isaac Barrow's Opinion of the Evidence of Christianity, afforded by the illuminating Operation of the Holy Spirit; and on the Holy Spirit in general.

Our country has produced many divines equally admirable for their doctrine and their eloquence, and, I believe, all competent judges will allow that Barrow stands among them preeminently distinguished. One of the first mathematicians and philosophers of his age, he thought it no derogation from his character as an acute reasoner, to maintain the doctrine of supernatural influence; that doctrine which some very inferior writers of the present day wish to stigmatize as fanatical and ridiculous.

"Our reason," says Dr. Barrow, "is shut up, and barred with various appetites, humours, and passions against gospel truths; nor can we admit

them into our hearts, except God, by his spirit, do set open our mind, and work a free passage for them into us. It is he who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, that must, as St. Paul speaketh, illustrate our hearts with the knowledge of these things. An unction* from the Holy One, clearing our eyes, softening our hearts, healing our distempered faculties, must, as St. John informeth us, teach and persuade us this sort of truths. A hearty belief of these seemingly incredible propositions must indeed be, as St. Paul calleth it, the gift of God, proceeding from that Spirit of faith whereof the same Apostle speaketh; such faith is not, as St. Basil saith, engendered by geometrical necessities, but by the effectual operations of the Holy Ghost. Flesh and blood will not reveal to us, nor can any man with clear confidence say that Jesus is the Lord (the Messias, the infallible Prophet, the universal Lawgiver, the Son of the living God) but by the Holy Ghost. Every spirit which sincerely confesseth him to be the Christ, we may, with St. John, safely conclude to be of God; for of ourselves we are not sufficient, as the Apostle says, λογιζεσθαι τι, to reason out or collect any of these things. We never, of our own accord, without divine attraction, should come unto Christ; that is, should effectually consent unto and embrace his institution, consisting of such unplausible propositions and precepts. Hardly would his own disciples, who had so long enjoyed the light of his conversation and instruction, have

* This word, though used in Scripture, and by the most learned divines, has been the subject of laughter among many; and the use of it has subjected this treatise of mine to the scoffs of those who sit in the seat of the scorner. In defence of it, I appeal to the apostle St. John; and, as Dr. Barrow was not ashamed to adopt it, I think I may venture to use it without scruple.

admitted it, if he had not granted them that Spirit of truth, whose work it was οδηγειν, to lead them in this unknown and uncouth way; αναγγελλειν, to tell them again and again, that is, to instil and inculcate these crabbed truths upon them; υπομιμνησκειν, to admonish, excite, and urge them to the marking and minding them: hardly, I say, without the guidance of this Spirit, would our Lord's disciples have admitted divers evangelical truths, as our Lord himself told them. I have, said he, many things beside to say to you, but ye cannot as yet bear them; but when he, the Spirit of truth, shall come he shall conduct you into all truth.

"As for the mighty sages of the world, the learned scribes, the subtle disputers, the deep politicians, the wise men according to the flesh, the men of most refined judgment and improved reason* in the world's eye, they were more ready to deride than to regard, to impugn than to admit these doctrines; to the Greeks, who sought wisdom, the preaching of them seemed foolishness.

"It is true, some few sparks or flashes of this divine knowledge may possibly be driven out by rational consideration. Philosophy may yield some twilight glimmerings thereof. Common reason may dictate a faint consent unto, may produce a cold tendency after some of these things; but a clear perception, and a resolute persuasion of mind, that full assurance of faith and inflexible confession of hope, ομολογια της ελπιδος ακλινης, which the Apostle to the Hebrews speaks of, that full assurance of under-

* Voltaire, Rousseau, Helvetius, Gibbon, Hume, and many most celebrated authors, were certainly not deficient in intellectual powers; and they reprobated and derided Christianity. In what then were they deficient? I fear, in grace, in the spirit of truth; which God denies to the proud, and gives to the humble.

standing, that abundant knowledge of the divine will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, with which St. Paul did pray that his Colossians might be replenished; these so perfect illustrations of the mind, so powerful convictions of the heart, do argue immediate influences* from the Fountain of life and wisdom, the divine Spirit. No external instruction could infuse, no interior discourse could excite them; could penetrate these opacities of ignorance, and dissipate these thick mists of prejudice, wherein nature and custom do involve us; could so thoroughly awaken the lethargic stupidity of our souls; could supple the refractory stiffness of our wills; could mollify the stony hardness of our hearts; could void our natural aversation to such things, and quell that φρονημα σαρκος, that carnal mind, which, St. Paul says, is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be; could depress those ὑψωματα, those lofty towers of self-conceit, reared against the knowledge of God, and demolish those οχυρωματα, those bulwarks of self-will and perverse stomach opposed against the impressions of divine faith, and captivate παν νοημα, every conceit and device of ours to the obedience of Christ and his discipline. Well, therefore, did St. Paul pray in behalf of his Ephesians, that God would bestow on them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the acknowledgment of him, and that the eyes of their mind might be enlightened, so as to know the hope of their calling; that is, to understand and believe the doctrines of Christianity.* * * *

"We proceed now to the peculiar offices, functions, and operations of the Holy Spirit: many such there are in an especial manner attributed or appro-

* Immediate influences: what will the rational Christians say of the great Barrow for this expression?

priated to him; which, as they respect God, seem reducible to two general ones: the declaration of God's mind, and the execution of his will; as they are referred to man, (for in regard to other beings, the Scripture doth not so much consider what he performs, it not concerning us to know it,) are especially the producing in us all actions requisite or conducible to our eternal happiness and salvation; to which may be added, the intercession between God and man, which jointly respecteth both.

"First, it is his especial work to disclose God's mind to us; whence he is styled the *Spirit of truth, the Spirit of prophecy, the Spirit of revelation*; for that all supernatural light and wisdom have ever proceeded from him. He instructed *all the prophets that have been since the world began, to know*, he enabled them to *speak* the mind of God concerning things present and future. Holy men (that have taught men their duty, and lead them in the way to bliss) were but his instruments, *speaking as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

"By his inspiration the holy Scriptures (the most full and certain witness of God's mind, the law and testimony by which our life is to be directed and regulated) were conceived. *He guided the apostles into all truth*, and by them instructed the world in the knowledge of God's gracious intentions towards mankind, and in all the holy mysteries of the gospel: *That which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him; but God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit*, saith St. Paul. All the knowledge we can pretend to in these things doth proceed

merely from his revelation, doth wholly rely upon his authority.

"To him it especially belongs to execute the will of God, in matters transcending the ordinary power and course of nature. Whence he is called the *power of the Most High*, (that is, the substantial power and virtue of God,) the *finger of God* (as by comparing the expression of St. Luke and St. Matthew may appear;) and whatever eminent God hath designed, he is said to have performed by him; by him he framed the world, and (as Job speaketh) *garnished the heavens*. By him he governeth the world, so that all extraordinary works of Providence, (when God, beside the common law and usual course of nature, doth interpose to do any thing,) all miraculous performances are attributed to his energy. By him our Saviour, by him the apostles, by him the prophets, are expressly said to perform their wonderful works; but especially by him God manages that great work, so earnestly designed by him, of our salvation; working in us all good dispositions, capacifying us for salvation, directing and assisting us in all our actions tending thereto.

"We naturally are void of those good dispositions in understanding, will, and affections, which are needful to render us acceptable unto God, fit to serve and please him, capable of any favour from him, of any true happiness in ourselves. Our minds naturally are blind, ignorant, stupid, giddy, and prone to error, especially in things supernatural and spiritual, and abstracted from ordinary sense. Our wills are froward and stubborn, light and unstable, inclining to evil, and averse from what is truly good; our affections are very irregular, disorderly, and unsettled; to remove which bad dispositions, (inconsistent with God's friendship and favour, driving us

into sin and misery,) and to beget those contrary to them, the knowledge and belief of divine truth, a love of goodness and delight therein; a well-composed, orderly, and steady frame of spirit, God in mercy doth grant to us the virtue of his Holy Spirit; who first opening our hearts, so as to let in and apprehend the light of divine truth, then by representation of proper arguments, persuading our reason to embrace it, begetteth divine knowledge, wisdom, and faith in our minds, which is the work of illumination and instruction, the first part of his office respecting our salvation.

"Then by continual impressions he bendeth our inclinations, and mollifieth our hearts, and tempereth our affections to a willing compliance with God's will, and a hearty complacence in that which is good and pleasing to God; so breeding all pious and virtuous inclinations in us, reverence towards God, charity to men, sobriety and purity as to ourselves, with the rest of those amiable and heavenly virtues of soul, which is the work of sanctification, another great part of his office.

"Both these operations together (enlightening our minds, sanctifying our wills and affections) do constitute and accomplish that work, which is styled the regeneration, renovation, vivification, new creation, resurrection of a man; the faculties of our souls being so improved, that we become, as it were, other men thereby; able and apt to do that for which before we were altogether indisposed and unfit.

"He also directeth and governeth our actions, continually leading and moving us in the ways of obedience to God's holy will and law. As we live by him, (having a new spiritual life implanted in us,) so we walk by him, are continually led and acted by his conduct and help. He reclaimeth us from error

and sin; he supporteth and strengtheneth us in temptation; he adviseth and admonisheth, exciteth and encourageth us to all works of piety and virtue.

"Particularly he guideth and quickeneth us in devotion, showing us what we should ask, raising in us holy desires and comfortable hopes, disposing us to approach unto God with firm dispositions of mind, love, and reverence, and humble confidence.

"It is also a notable part of the Holy Spirit's office to comfort and sustain us in all our religious practice, so particularly in our doubts, difficulties, distresses, and afflictions; to beget joy, peace, and satisfaction in us, in all our performances, and in all our sufferings, whence the title of Comforter belongeth to him.

"It is also another part thereof to assure us of God's gracious love and favour, and that we are his children; confirming in us the hopes of our everlasting inheritance. We feeling ourselves to live spiritually by him, to love God and goodness, to thirst after righteousness, and to delight in pleasing God, are thereby raised to hope God loves and favours us; and that he having, by so authentic a seal, ratified his word and promise, having already bestowed so sure a pledge, so precious an earnest, so plentiful first-fruits, will not fail to make good the remainder designed and promised us, of everlasting joy and bliss."

Let no man be afraid or ashamed of maintaining opinions on the divine energy, which are thus supported by a scholar and philosopher like Isaac Barrow; a name which, at Cambridge, has ever stood next in honour to Isaac Newton.

SECTION X.

Bishop Bull's Opinion on the Influence of the Spirit of God on the Mind of Man, and its Union with it; the Loss of that Spirit by Adam's Fall, and the Recovery of it by Christ.

Of Bishop Bull it may justly be said that he was one of the greatest ornaments and firmest pillars of the church. If our modern objectors possessed a due degree of humility, they would at least hesitate before they condemned a doctrine sanctioned by a man of his profound learning and matchless sagacity.

"The second way," says Bishop Bull, "by which the Spirit of God witnesseth with our spirit, that we are the sons of God, is by enlightening our understandings and strengthening the eyes of our minds, as occasion requires, to discern those gracious fruits and effects which God hath wrought in us.

"The Spirit of God, which in the first beginning of things moved upon the face of the great deep, and invigorated the chaos, or dark and confused heap of things, and caused light to shine out of that darkness, can, with the greatest ease, when he pleases, cause the light of divine consolation to arise and shine upon the dark and disconsolate soul. And this he often doth. I may here appeal to the experience of many good Christians, who sometimes find a sudden joy coming into their minds, enlightening their understandings, dispelling all clouds from thence, warming and enlivening their affections, and enabling them to discern the graces of God shining in their brightness, and to feel them vigorously acting in their souls, so that they have been, after a sort, trans-

figured with their Saviour, and wished, with St. Peter, that they might always dwell on that mount Tabor.* * * *

"Man may be considered in a double relation; first in relation to the natural, animal, and earthly life; and so he is a perfect man, that hath only a reasonable soul and body adapted to it; for the powers and faculties of these are sufficient to the exercise of the functions and operations belonging to such a life. But secondly, man may be considered in order to a supernatural end, and as designed to a spiritual and celestial life; and of this life the Spirit of God is the principle. For man's natural powers and faculties, even as they were before the fall, entire, were not sufficient or able of themselves to reach such a supernatural end, but needed the power of the divine Spirit to strengthen, elevate, and raise them. He that denies this, opposes himself against the stream and current of the holy Scriptures, and the consent of the Catholic church. Therefore to the perfect constitution of man, considered in this relation, a reasonable soul and a body adapted thereunto are not sufficient; but there is necessarily required an union of the divine Spirit with both, as it were a third essential principle. This, as it is a certain truth, so it is a great mystery of Christianity.* * * *

"The great Basil, in his homily entitled, *Quod Deus non est Author peccati,* speaking of the nature of man, as it was at first created, hath these words; *What was the chief or principal good it enjoyed?* THE ASSESSION OF GOD AND ITS CONJUNCTION WITH HIM BY LOVE; *from which, when it fell, it became depraved with various and manifold evils.* So in his book, *de Spiritu Sancto,* cap. 15, he plainly tells us, *The dispensation of God and our Saviour towards man, is but the recalling of him from the fall, and his*

return into the friendship of that God, from that alienation which sin had caused. This was the end of Christ's coming in the flesh, of his life and conversation described in the gospel, of his passion, cross, burial, and resurrection; that man, who is saved by the imitation of Christ, might regain that ANCIENT ADOPTION: where he plainly supposeth that man before his fall had the adoption of a son; and consequently the Spirit of adoption. And so he expressly interprets himself afterwards in the same chapter: *By the Holy Spirit we are restored into paradise, we regain the kingdom of heaven, we return to the adoption of sons.* Again, (*Homil. advers. Eunomium* 5, p. 117,) which have these express words: *We are called in the sanctification of the Spirit, as the Apostle teacheth. This* (Spirit) *renews us, and makes us again the image of God, and by the laver of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, we are adopted to the Lord, and the new creature again partakes of the Spirit, of which being deprived, it had waxed old. And thus man becomes again the image of God, who had fallen from the divine similitude, and was become like the beasts that perish.*

"St. Cyril (7th *Dial. de Trin.* p. 653,) delivers the same doctrine with great perspicuity and elegancy, in these words: *For when the animal* (*viz.* man) *had turned aside unto wickedness, and out of too much love of the flesh had superinduced on himself the disease of sin,* THAT SPIRIT WHICH FORMED HIM AFTER THE DIVINE IMAGE, AND AS A SEAL WAS SECRETLY IMPRESSED ON HIS SOUL, WAS SEPARATED FROM HIM, *and so he became corruptible and deformed, and every way vicious. But after that the Creator of the universe had designed to restore to its pristine firmness and beauty that which was fallen into corruption, and*

was become adulterated and deformed by sin superinduced, he sent again into it that divine and holy Spirit which was withdrawn from it, and which hath a natural aptitude and power to change us into the celestial image, viz. *by transforming us into his own likeness.* And in the fourth book of the same work, *When the only begotten Son was made man, finding man's nature bereft of its ancient and primitive good he hastened to transform it again into the same state, out of the fountain of his fulness, sending forth* (the Spirit,) *and saying,* RECEIVE THE HOLY GHOST."

The doctrine of receiving the Holy Spirit is undoubtedly mysterious. The operation cannot be made evident to the senses, like the tangible and visible objects of experimental philosophy: but is not the whole of the Christian religion mysterious? Is not natural religion mysterious? Is not the material world, all that we see around us, mysterious to poor mortals, born just to look about them and to die? UNIVERS ENIGMATIQUE, or, *The whole World a Riddle,* is the well-chosen title to a work of an ingenious foreigner.*

SECTION XI.

The opinions of Bishop Pearson and Doctor Scott, Author of the Christian Life, and a warm advocate for natural Religion.

BISHOP Pearson is in the highest esteem as a divine. His book on the Creed is recommended to young students, in the course of their reading preparatory to holy orders, by tutors, and by bishops. It has been most accurately examined and universally ap-

* Videmus nunc per speculum in ÆNIGMATE.—*We see now through a glass as by an* ÆNIGMA. 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

proved by the most eminent theologues of our church, as an orthodox exposition of the Christian Creed. Let us hear him on the subject of the SPIRIT'S evidence, which now engages our attention.

"As the increase and perfection, so the original or initiation of faith is from the Spirit of God, not only by an external proposal in the word, but by an internal illumination in the soul, by which we are inclined to the obedience of faith, in assenting to those truths which unto a natural and carnal man are foolishness. And thus we affirm not only the revelation of the will of God, but also the illumination of the soul of man, to be part of the office of the Spirit of God."*

Dr. Scott, an orthodox divine, a zealous teacher of morality, celebrated for a book entitled the Christian Life, says, "that without the Holy Ghost we can do nothing; that he is the Author and Finisher of our faith, who worketh in us to will and do of his good pleasure. His first office is the informing of our minds with the light of heavenly truth. Thus the Apostle prays that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, would give unto them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, that the eyes of their understandings being enlightened, they might know what is the hope of Christ's calling;† and we are told, *that it is by* RECEIVING THE SPIRIT OF GOD, *that we* KNOW *the things that are freely given us of God.*‡

"Now this illumination of the Spirit is two-fold; first, external, by that revelation which he hath given us of God's mind and will in the holy Scripture, and that miraculous evidence by which he sealed and attested it; *for all scripture is given by inspi-*

* Bishop Pearson on the Creed, Art. 8.

† Ephes. i 17, 18. ‡ 1 Cor. ii. 12.

*ration of God;** or as it is elsewhere expressed, *was delivered by holy men, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;*† and all those miraculous testimonies we have to the truth and divinity of Scripture are from the Holy Ghost, and, upon that account, are called the demonstration of the Spirit; so that all the light we receive from Scripture, and all the evidence we have that that light is divine, we derive originally from the Holy Spirit.

"But besides this external illumination of the Holy Spirit, there is also an internal one, which consists in impressing that external light and evidence of Scripture upon our understandings, whereby we are enabled more clearly to apprehend, and more effectually to believe it.

"For though the divine Spirit doth not (at least in the ordinary course of his operation) illuminate our minds with any new truths, or new evidences of truth, but only presents to our minds those old and primitive truths and evidences which he at first revealed and gave to the world; yet there is no doubt but he still continues not only to suggest them both to our minds, but to urge and repeat them with that importunity, and thereby to imprint them with that clearness and efficacy, as that if we do not, through a wicked prejudice against them, wilfully divert our minds from them to vain or sinful objects, we must unavoidably apprehend them far more distinctly, and assent to them far more cordially and effectually than otherwise we should or could have done; for our minds are naturally so vain and stupid, so giddy, listless, and inadvertent, especially in spiritual things, which are abstract from common sense, as that, did not the Holy Spirit frequently present, importunately urge, and thereby fix these on our

* 2 Tim. iii. 16. † 2 Pet. i. 21.

minds, our knowledge of them would be so confused, and our belief so wavering and unstable, as that they would never have any preventing influence on our wills and affections. So that our knowledge and belief of divine things, so far as they are saving and effectual to our renovation, are the fruits and products of this internal illumination."*

SECTION XII.

Bishop Smalridge on the absolute Necessity of Grace.

I AM sensible that I have now sufficiently defended the doctrine of divine energy, by the authorities of men to whom the world has hitherto paid great respect and deference. I have fully exempted it from the charge of singularity, fanaticism, and folly. But, as the subject is of unspeakable importance, I have thought it proper to add a few more testimonies, in the hope that some among the many opposers of the doctrine, may find reason to change their opinions, or at least think the matter not unworthy their most serious consideration. The following authority is that of Bishop Smalridge, Dean of Christ-church, a man very eminent as a classical scholar, and the intimate friend of Aldrich and Atterbury. Such writers will not be ranked by men of sense with the illiterate zealots of Methodism.

"He who is not convinced of the absolute ne-

* This testimony is the more remarkable, as it was given when divines extolled morality and decried all mystery. Our Saviour and Socrates then ranked together like Plutarch's parallels. Warburton, following their fashion, expressly says, "that Socrates, preaching moral virtue, and dying to bear witness to the unity of the godhead, was made to the Grecian people wisdom and righteousness, not less than Jesus."

cessity of God's grace to invigorate his obedience to the divine laws, must be a perfect stranger to himself, as well as to the word of God; and must have been as careless an observer of what passes within his own breast, as of what is written in the holy Scriptures. When one gives himself leisure to take a survey of his own faculties, and observe how dark sighted he is in the perception of divine truths; with what reluctance he sometimes chooses what his understanding plainly represents to him as good, and refuses what his own conscience directly pronounces to be evil; how apt his affections are to rebel against the dictates of his reason, and to hurry him another way than he knows he should, and, in his sober mind, very fain would go; when he sets before his thoughts the great variety of duties commanded, and of sins forbidden, and the perverseness of his own depraved nature, which gives him an antipathy to those duties and a strong inclination to those sins; when he reflects on the power and cunning of his spiritual enemies, always alluring him to sin, and seducing him from the practice of virtue; when he weighs with himself the necessity of practising every duty, and forsaking every kind of wickedness, in order to secure a good title to the promises of the gospel; when he takes a view of those particular obstacles which hinder him in the exercise of several graces, and of the strong temptations which prompt him to the commission of several sins; when he considers the aptness of human nature to grow weary of performing the same things, though in themselves never so pleasant, and its still greater disposition to grow faint, when the actions continually to be repeated are burdensome to flesh and blood; when he compares the necessity of perseverance with the difficulty of it, the pre-

valence of things present and sensible with the weakness wherewith those objects affect us that are absent and spiritual; when, I say, a considering man puts all these things together, he cannot but be convinced, that *narrow is the path that leads unto* everlasting *life*, and that without ILLUMINATION from the SPIRIT OF GOD, he shall not be able rightly to discern it; that *strait is the gate* which opens an entry into heaven; and that he cannot, by the force of his own natural strength, without new power given him from above, and the secret influences of God's Holy Spirit adding force and energy to his own endeavours, force his way through it. Conscious, therefore, of his own weakness, he will acknowledge the necessity of God's grace; and being ready to sink through his own natural weight, unless supported by foreign help, he will cry out with St. Peter, *Save me, Lord, or else I perish.*

"Some philosophers of old flattered the pride and vanity of men, by teaching them that they wanted nothing to make them virtuous, but only a firm and steady resolution of being so; that this resolution they themselves were masters of, and might exert at their own pleasure. They confidently boasted that their happiness was a thing wholly in their own power; that they need not ask of the gods to be virtuous, nor consequently to be happy, since they could be so without their aid or concurrence, or even in despite of them. The *Pelagians* afterwards raised their heresies upon the principles which these heathen philosophers had first broached; they engaged in the quarrel of depraved nature against divine grace: all our disorders they would have to be the effects not of sin but of nature; all our evil inclinations seemed to them capable of being subdued by our own unassisted reason; and they did not

think the succour of any supernatural grace necessary either for the combating of vice, or the maintenance of their integrity and virtue. But the sober Christian hath learned from the Scriptures to speak and to think more humbly of himself, and more becomingly and magnificently of God; we are there taught that *we are not sufficient of ourselves to think*, much less to do, *any thing as of ourselves, but that our sufficiency is of God;* that it is *God which worketh within us both to will and to do of his good pleasure;* that it is *by the Spirit* we must *mortify the deeds of the body*, if we would *live;* that it is God who, by his Spirit, *makes us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight.* The humble and devout Christian being thus satisfied of the necessity of God's grace, both from his own experience and from the Scriptures, and being assured of the vital influences of this spirit from the promises made to him in the gospel, will not be over-curious to inquire into the secret and inconceivable manner of its operation. He will choose rather to feel these influences, than to understand or explain them, and will not doubt of that power, which, though he cannot give an account of as to the manner of its working, he plainly perceives to be great and marvellous from its mighty and wonderful effects: for when, in reading the holy Scriptures, he finds the veil of darkness removed from before his understanding; when those clouds of ignorance that had overcast his mind, are presently dispersed; when the doubts under which he had for some time laboured are on a sudden cleared; when such pious thoughts as were wont to pass transiently are long dwelt upon, so as to leave behind them deep and lasting impressions; when these are suggested to him without his seek-

ing, and are urged and pressed upon him so importunately, that he cannot choose but listen unto them; when, from a calm and serious consideration of the state of his own soul, the odiousness and danger of sin, the beauty and necessity of holiness, he is led to make good and pious resolutions of serving God with greater purity for the time to come; when he finds a sudden impulse upon his spirits, rouzing him up to the performance of some important duty which he had before neglected; or an unexpected check, stopping him in the midst of his course, when he is rushing on blindly and impetuously to the commission of some heinous sin; when in his devotions he finds his attention fixed, his affections inflamed, and his heart melted within him; when, while the voice of God's minister preaching the saving truths of the gospel sounds in his ears, he is sensible of an inward voice speaking with greater force and efficacy to his soul, to his understanding, and to his heart; when, under the pressure of any grievous affliction, he feels unexpected joy and comfort; when *light rises up in the* midst *of darkness;* when there is *given unto him beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;* upon all these and the like occasions he is sensible of the presence and aid of God's Holy Spirit, whose *grace* alone is *sufficient* to all these purposes, and whose *strength is* thus *made perfect in his weakness.*

"How the operation of God's Holy Spirit is consistent with the freedom of our own wills; how far we are passive and how far active in those good thoughts, words, and works, which are wrought in us by the influence of this Holy Spirit, the practical Christian doth not much trouble himself to inquire. Whatsoever is good in him, that he devoutly ascribes

not unto himself, but unto the grace of God which was afforded him; *O Lord, not unto me, but unto thy name be the glory;* or having by his former sins justly merited to be left destitute and forsaken; in the latter case he is as ready to make Daniel's humble acknowledgment; *O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto me confusion of face.* He will leave it to others to *dispute* about the nature, extent, and efficacy of this grace, and will make it his own chief labour to obtain, to cherish, and to improve it; he strives, according to the best of his judgment, to form right notions of its efficacy, but he is still more solicitous that no mistakes in his opinions about it may have any dangerous influence upon his practice. He cannot be very wrong in his notions, whilst he believes that man's will is neither so free, as without God's grace to do good, nor so enslaved, as not to be at liberty either to concur with or to resist that grace; but whether these notions about a matter so intricate be exactly right or not, he is fully assured that he cannot be mistaken in his measures of acting, if he exerts his own endeavours with as much vigour and earnestness, as if by them alone he were finally to stand or fall; and, at the same time, implores God's grace with as much fervency, as if that alone could support him:—if he neither relies so far on his own strength, as not humbly to acknowledge that it is *God alone who works in him both to will and to do,* nor so far depends on the grace of God to save him, as to forget that he is required to work out his own salvation:—if, lastly, at his approaches to the holy altar, he doth prepare himself for the reception of the blessed sacrament, with as much care, diligence, and scrupulosity, as if the benefits he there expects did entirely depend upon the disposition he brings along with him, and

his own fitness to communicate, and yet, at the same time, not trusting on his own imperfect righteousness, but on God's infinite mercy, he doth there, with faith, with humility, with reverence, address himself to that blessed SPIRIT, who is the *giver of every good and perfect gift*, that he may be filled with his grace and heavenly benediction."

I cannot but hope that these opinions of a classical scholar, a man adorned with all elegant and polite learning, as well as with philosophy; a man whose habits of life and social connections tended to remove him from all contagion of vulgar enthusiasm, will have great weight with the elegant and polite part of the world, in recommending the neglected or exploded doctrine of grace. No man need blush to entertain the religious sentiments of Bishop Smalridge; nor can folly or fanaticism be reasonably imputed to divines like him, whose minds were enriched with all the stores of science, and polished with all the graces of ornamental literature.

SECTION XIII.

Human Learning highly useful, and to be pursued with all diligence, but cannot, of itself, furnish EVIDENCES *of Christianity completely satisfactory, like those which the heart of the good Christian feels from the* Divine Influence: *with the Opinion of Dr. Isaac Watts.*

LEARNING should be the handmaid of religion. She must not take upon her the office of a judge or arbitress of divine revelation. Her employment in the church of God is highly honourable and useful, though subordinate. Let learning then be cultivated, and continue to flourish and abound, but let it be confined to its proper province. Religion indeed is the sun to the soul; the source of light and the

cherisher of life. But because there is a sun, must there be no inferior lights? God has made the moon and the stars also, and pronounced that they are good.

The enemies to Christianity must not be suffered to triumph over it, by asserting that it is adverse to learning, and tends to introduce the ignorance of barbarism. Sound learning, under due regulations, contributes to soften the mind, and prepare it for the divine agency. A learned, virtuous, and religious man, whose religion is vital and truly Christian, is a superior being, even in his mortal state, and may be imagined, by us his fellow-creatures, to be little lower than the angels.

Nobody can hold learning, and the noble inventions of human ingenuity, in higher esteem than myself; I look up to them with affection and admiration. But after all, and however perfect and beautiful they may be, they are but human, the product of poor, short-lived, fallible mortals. Whatever comes from the FATHER OF LIGHTS, from him who made that mind which is capable of learning and science, must deserve more attention and honour than can possibly be due to the most beautiful and stupendous works of human ingenuity. These are not to be slighted, but beloved, pursued, rewarded. But I am a mortal. Every moment is bringing me nearer to that period when the curtain shall fall, and all *these things be hidden from my eyes*. My first attention and warmest affection therefore ought, as I value my own happiness, to be fixed on things spiritual and eternal.

All arts, all sciences, must be secondary and instrumental to the attainment of DIVINE ILLUMINATION. I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD, says Jesus Christ. Can any reasonable man rest satisfied without coming to the light after such a declaration? Will he be

contented with the radiance of dim lights and false lights, when he is invited to approach the brilliant and the true?

Learning is necessary for the purposes of this life; it is an ornament and a defence. It is highly useful in religious investigation. It furnishes arguments to enforce morality, to persuade to all that is good and great, and to deter from folly and vice. But let it ever keep to its own office, which is certainly, in religious matters, ministerial. It can amuse; it can inform; but it cannot supply the *summum bonum;* it cannot raise fallen man to his original state. GRACE only can restore man to God's image. If learning could have done it, why were the heathens unrestored? are not the infidels often learned? and would not the advent of our Lord and Saviour have been superfluous, if learning could have repaired the ruins of the fall?

Few (as I have already said) in the mass of mankind are learned. What is to become of the millions then, if the gospel of Jesus Christ, by which alone they can live in the sweet tranquillity of a state of grace, and die with religious hope and confidence, cannot be received, with sufficient evidence, without deep learning, logical and metaphysical disputation? What is to prove it to them, who have neither books, leisure, nor ability to study, if God himself do not teach them by his Spirit? Blessed be his name, he has taught them, and continues to teach them. It is among the learned chiefly that infidelity prevails. She inhabits libraries, and walks abroad in academic groves, but is rarely seen in the cottage, in the field, or in the manufactory. The poor and the unlearned do in general believe in the gospel most firmly.*

* Whereas there are persons among the great and learned of whom it may be justly said, they are HOMINES MULTÆ RELIGIONIS,

What is the evidence which convinces them? It is the witness of the Spirit; and thanks be to him who said *my grace is sufficient for thee.* "He that believeth on the Son of God hath this witness in himself."

The opinion of a man, which I shall now produce, like Dr. Isaac Watts, on the true nature of Christianity, is almost of itself decisive. He was not only a devout and zealous Christian, but a profound scholar, a natural philosopher, a logician, and a metaphysician. His life and conversation exhibited a pattern of every Christian virtue. Let us hear him.

"Every true Christian," says he, "has a sufficient argument and evidence to support his faith, without being able to prove the authority of any of the canonical writings. He may hold fast his religion, and be assured that it is divine, though he cannot bring any learned proof that the book that contains it is divine too; nay, though the book itself should even happen to be lost or destroyed: and this will appear, with open and easy conviction, by asking a few such questions as these:

"Was not this same gospel preached with glorious success before the New Testament was written?

"Were not the same doctrines of salvation by Jesus Christ published to the world by the ministry of the apostles, and made effectual to convert thousands, before they set themselves to commit these doctrines to writing?

"And had not every sincere believer, every true convert, this blessed witness in himself, that Christianity was from God?

"Eight or ten years had passed away, after the

NULLIUS PENE PIETATIS; men of much religion, (strictness in morals and ceremonials,) yet of scarcely any piety or affectionate devotion.

ascension of Christ, before any part of the New Testament was written; and what multitudes of Christian converts were born again by the preaching of the word, and raised to a divine and heavenly life, long ere this book was half finished or known, and that among the heathens as well as Jews. Great numbers of the Gentile world became holy believers, each of them having the epistle of Christ written in the heart, and bearing about within them a noble and convincing proof that this religion was divine; and that without a written gospel, without epistles, and without a Bible.

"In the first ages of Christianity, for several hundred years together, how few among the common people were able to read? How few could get the possession or the use of a Bible, when all sacred as well as profane books were of necessity copied by writing? How few of the populace, in any large town or city, could obtain or could use any small part of Scripture, before the art of printing made the word of God so common? And yet millions of these were regenerated, sanctified, and saved by the ministration of the gospel.

"Be convinced then that Christianity has a more noble inward witness belonging to it than is derived from ink and paper, from precise letters and syllables. And though God, in his great wisdom and goodness, saw it necessary that a New Testament should be written, to preserve these holy doctrines uncorrupted through all ages, and though he has been pleased to be the invariable and authentic rule of our faith and practice, and made it a glorious instrument of instructing ministers and leading men to salvation in all these latter times; yet Christianity has a secret witness in the hearts of believers, that does not depend on their knowledge and proof of the authority of the

Scriptures, nor of any of the controversies that in latter ages have attended the several manuscript copies and different readings and translations of the Bible.

"Now this is of admirable use and importance in the Christian life, upon several accounts. First, if we consider, how few poor unlearned Christians there are, who are capable of taking in the arguments, which are necessary to prove the divine authority of the sacred writings; and how few, even among the learned, can well adjust and determine many of the different readings or different translations of particular passages in Scripture. Now a wise Christian does not build his faith or hope merely upon any one or two single texts, but upon the general scope, sum, and substance of the gospel. By this he feels a spiritual life of peace and piety begun in him. And here lies his evidence that Christianity is divine, and that these doctrines are from heaven, though a text or two may be falsely written or wrong translated, and though a whole book or two may be hard to be proved authentic.

"The learned well know what need there is of turning over the histories of ancient times, of the traditions and writings of the fathers, and all authors pious and profane; what need of critical skill in the holy languages and in ancient manuscripts; what a wide survey of various circumstances of fact, time, place, style, diction, is necessary to confirm one or another book or verse of the New Testament, and to answer the doubts of the scrupulous, and the bold objections of the infidel. Now how few of the common rank of Christians, whose hearts are inlaid with true faith in the Son of God, and with real holiness, have leisure, books, instruction, advantages, and judgment sufficient to make a thorough search into these matters, and to determine, upon a just

view of argument, that these books were written by the sacred authors whose names they bear, and that these authors were under an immediate inspiration in writing them. What a glorious advantage is it then to have such an infallible testimony to the truth of the gospel wrought and written in the heart by renewing grace, as does not depend on this laborious, learned, and argumentative evidence of the divine authority of the Bible, or of any particular book or verse in it!

"Secondly, if we consider what bold assaults are sometimes made upon the faith of the unlearned Christian by the deists and unbelievers of our age, by disputing against the authority of the Scripture, by ridiculing the strange narratives and sublime doctrines of the Bible, by setting the seeming contradictions in a blasphemous light, and then demanding, 'How can you prize or how can you believe that this book is the word of God, or that the religion it teaches is divine?' In such an hour of contest, how happy is the Christian that can say, Though I am not able to solve all the difficulties in the Bible, nor maintain the sacred authority of it against the cavils of wit and learning, yet I am well assured that the doctrines of this book are sacred, and the authority of them divine; for when I heard and received them, they changed my nature, they subdued my sinful appetites, they made a new creature of me, and raised me from death to life; they made me love God above all things, and gave me the lively and well-grounded hope of his love. Therefore I cannot doubt but that the chief principles of this book are divine, though I cannot so well prove that the very words and syllables of it are so too; for it is the sense of Scripture, and not the mere letters of it, on which I build my hope. What

if the Scripture should not be divine? What if this gospel and the other epistles should not be written by inspiration? What if these should be merely the words of men, and not the very word of God?—Though I cannot recollect all the arguments that prove Matthew, Mark, and Luke, to be divine historians, or Peter and Paul to be inspired writers; yet the substance and chief sense of these gospels and their epistles must needs be divine; for it has begun the spiritual and eternal life in my soul; and this is my witness, or rather the witness of the Spirit of God within us, that Christ is the son of God, the Saviour of sinners, and the religion that I profess and practise is safe and divine.

"And though there are many and sufficient arguments drawn from criticism, history, and human learning to prove the sacred authority of the Bible, and such as may give abundant satisfaction to an honest inquirer, and full satisfaction that it is the word of God; yet this is the chief evidence that the greatest part of Christians can ever attain of the divine original of the holy Scripture itself, as well as the truth of the doctrines contained in it, namely, that they have found a holy and heavenly change passed upon them by reading and hearing the propositions, the histories, the precepts, the promises, and the theatenings of this book; and thence they are wont to infer, that the God of truth would not attend a book, which was not agreeable to his mind, with such glorious instances of his own power and grace.

"I have dwelt the longer on showing that the inward *witness* is such a witness to the truth of the Christian religion as does not depend on the exact truth of letters and syllables, nor on the critical knowledge of the copies of the Bible, nor on this old manuscript or the other new translation, because

every manuscript and every translation has enough of the gospel to save souls by it, and make a man a Christian; and because I think this point of great importance in our age, which has taken so many steps to heathenism and infidelity; for this argument or EVIDENCE will defend a Christian in the profession of the true religion, though he may not have skill enough to defend his Bible.

"'Why do you believe in Jesus?' asks the unbeliever. If you have this answer ready at hand, 'I have found the efficacy and power of the gospel in my heart;' this will be sufficient to answer every cavil.

"The words of St. Paul to the Corinthians have a reference to our present subject. *Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us; written not with* INK, *but with the* SPIRIT OF THE LIVING GOD; *not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.*"*

Thus far Dr. Watts, in his sermons on the *inward Witness to Christianity*, where the reader will find a great deal of truly evangelical instruction. For my own part, I cannot but think this good man approached as nearly to Christian perfection as any mortal ever did in this sublunary state; and therefore I consider him as a better interpreter of Christian doctrines than the most learned critics, who, proud of their reason and their learning, despised or neglected the very life and soul of Christianity, the living everlasting gospel, the supernatural operation of divine grace. And be it ever remembered, that Dr. WATTS was a man who cultivated his reason with particular care, who studied the abstrusest sciences, and was as well qualified to become a verbal critic, or a logical disputant on the

* 2 Cor. iii. 2. 3.

Scriptures, as the most learned among the doctors of the Sorbonne, or the greatest proficients in polemical divinity. I mention this circumstance for the consideration of those who insinuate that the doctrine of grace cannot be entertained but by ignorant, as well as fanatical persons; by persons uninitiated in the mysteries of philosophy.

SECTION XIV.

The Opinion of Dr. Lucas, the celebrated Author of an Inquiry after Happiness, *on the Evidence of Christianity arising from divine* Communication.

THE writings of Dr. Lucas appear to me distinguished by the true spirit of Christianity. They were extremely popular at their first publication, and are still held in high esteem. The testimony of so good a man, so able and engaging a writer, must tend to persuade all who possess candour and Christian humility, that the doctrine of divine influence is the leading and most important tenet of Christianity.

"There is," says Dr. Lucas, "no great need of acquired learning in order to true illumination. Our Saviour did not exact of his disciples, as a necessary preparation for his doctrine, the knowledge of tongues, the history of times or of nature, logic, metaphysics, or the like. These indeed may be serviceable to many excellent ends: they may be great accomplishments of the mind, great ornaments, and very engaging entertainments of life. They may be, finally, very excellent and necessary instruments of, or introductions to, several professions and employments: but as to religious perfection and happiness, to these they can never be indispensably necessary.

"A man may be excellently, habitually good, without more languages than one; he may be fully persuaded of those great truths, that will render him master of his passions and independent of the world; that will render him easy and useful in this life, and glorious in another, though he be no logician nor metaphysician.

"The qualifications previously necessary to illumination are two or three moral ones, implied in that infant temper which our Saviour required in those who would be his disciples,—humility, impartiality, and a thirst and love of truth.

"There is a knowledge which, like the summit of Pisgah, where Moses stood, shows us the land of Canaan, but does not bring us to it.

"How does the power of darkness, at this moment, prevail amidst the light of the gospel? Are men ignorant? No: but their knowledge is not such as it ought to be; it is not the light of life.

"The understanding does not always determine the will.

"Though every honest man be not able to discover all the arguments on which his creed stands, he yet may discover enough; and what is more, he may have an inward, vital, sensible proof of them; he may feel the power, the charms of holiness, experience its congruity and loveliness to the human soul, so as that he shall have no doubts or scruples. But besides this, there is a voice within, a divine Teacher and Instructor. There are sudden suggestions, unexpected manifestations, extraordinary elevations of mind, which are never to be accounted for, but by a divine principle.

"I see no reason why the Spirit may not vouchsafe us particular impulses, directions, and intimations

upon extraordinary emergencies, where holy writ affords us no light, and human prudence is at a loss.

"Extraordinary natural parts are not necessary to illumination. The gospel takes no notice of them. Such is the beauty of holiness, that it requires rather a fine sensibility arising from purity of heart, than quickness of intellectual apprehension, to render us enamoured of it."

A truth which involves the present and eternal happiness of human beings, cannot be placed in too great a variety of lights, or too repeatedly enforced. "He that soweth to the spirit," says St. Paul, "shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."* When such is the harvest, every benevolent mind must wish to urge mankind, in this their seed-time, to sow to the Spirit. What is so important cannot be inculcated by too frequent repetition. I therefore quote authors which occur to me in the course of my reflections on the subject, whose opinions, though similar, may add weight to doctrines already advanced. Such is the above from Dr. Lucas, a most excellent divine, never charged with the least tendency to blamable enthusiasm. I wish my reader to pay particular attention to what he suggests on the INFANT TEMPER,† required by our Lord in his followers. "Except," says Jesus Christ, "ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not

* Galatians, vi. 8.

† There is no doubt but that grace is vouchsafed at a very early period of life. Some children appear to be truly angelic in their dispositions, innocent, loving, and lovely. "There are some," says Dr. Doddridge, "on whom divine grace has wrought so early, that perhaps it is difficult to find a time from the first dawning of reason, when they did not appear in the main under the influences of it. These early dispositions must appear to be in a peculiar manner the work of God's spirit, considering the strength of appetite

enter into the kingdom of God."*— "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a LITTLE CHILD, he shall not enter therein."†

The amiable dispositions of infants must therefore be produced in the heart, before the religion of Christ can be received into it. But are such dispositions best produced, or can they be produced at all, by subtle disputations, by scholastic theology, by bringing forward objections in order to display ingenuity in answers, laboured indeed and sagacious, but, after all, unsatisfactory to many, and unintelligible to more?

Yet this mode of recommending Christianity is the only one approved by some persons of high authority; and there are those who would not venture to preach the doctrine of grace, the teaching of God and a spiritual understanding, lest they should be numbered with enthusiasts, and lose all chance of promotion and worldly esteem. This danger must be voluntarily incurred by all who would succeed in repelling the rapid advances of infidelity. Christianity flourished wonderfully while its genuine doctrines, the glad tidings of grace, were preached; and it has been gradually declining, ever since it has become fashionable, in order to discountenance fanaticism, to recommend mere heathen morality as the essence of Christianity, and to make use of no other arguments to prove the truth of it, but such as an ingenious man, without the smallest particle of religion in his heart, may produce in abundance.

and passion in children, and the weakness of reason. It would be extremely wrong to exempt such out of the class of the regenerate, and to confine the phrase to those who have been reclaimed from a vicious and immoral course."

* Mat. xviii. 3. † Mark, x. 15.

Professional advocates, furnished with human arguments only and external evidence, appear to the true Christian, as well as to the unbeliever, like lawyers pleading for a fee, on that side of the question which they know to be wrong, or at least are not convinced is right. It is indeed certain that a dull and plodding scholar may make a wonderful display of erudition in defence of Christianity, without feeling a lively sense of it himself, or communicating it to his readers. His materials supply the adversaries with arms for fresh attacks, and at the same time fail in building an impregnable rampart round the citadel which he undertakes to defend. There is usually some weak place (for human learning and ingenuity cannot defend every part) at which the enemy enters; and, having once entered, he takes possession of the fortress, and uses the stores and ammunition against the very persons who collected them with so much labour.

Nothing of this kind can happen when recourse is had to the teaching of the Spirit. It overcomes the heart; it brings it to the lovely state of infantine innocence and simplicity; and renders him who, like St. Paul, was a persecutor of it, a warm friend and advocate.

It is certain that the argumentative mode of addressing unbelievers, and a reliance on external evidence, has hitherto failed. Many of the most learned and able men of modern times, who were capable of understanding the historical, logical, and metaphysical defences of Christianity, have read them without conviction, and laughed at their laborious imbecility.

It is time to try another mode: and all who are sincere Christians will favour the experiment; for they would rather see men converted to the true

religion, though they should become fervent, and zealous even to a degree of harmless enthusiasm, than totally alienated from it, and enlisted under the partisans of infidelity.

If men of the world and men of learning* will not interpose to obstruct the divine energy, we shall see it produce its genuine effects in all their vigour and maturity, as well in the world of grace as of nature. A secret operation gives life and growth to the tree, and so will it to the human soul. "I am the vine, ye are the branches," says our Saviour: the branches will soon wither and decay, if the sap flows not to them from the vine.

SECTION XV.

Passages from a well-known Book of an anonymous Author, entitled Inward Testimony.

"REAL Christians find, that as soon as they apply themselves to know what is comprehensible, in the sacred Scriptures, and to a sincere endeavour to do what is practicable, so soon a faith in its incomprehensible doctrines is produced, and then is fulfilled, that he that doth the will of God shall know of the doctrines whether they be of God.

"The divine Spirit concurs with the outward revelation in changing a man's sceptical disposition, and then he is fixed: otherwise he would be as ready as ever to embrace the first plausible argument against the gospel.†

* Nec *philosophos* se ostentent, sed satagant fieri THEODIDACTI. —*Neither let them ostentatiously put themselves off as* philosophers; *but labour to become men* taught of God. GREG. ix. *Ep. ad Univ. Paris.*

† "Our light is like a candle, every wind of vain doctrine blows it out or makes the light tremulous; but the lights of heaven are fixed and bright and shine for ever." BISHOP TAYLOR.

"We have some, who, by their mere notional knowledge of revelation, the outward testimony to Christianity, disbelieve the reality or necessity of any acquaintance with the inward testimony, by which the divine Spirit produces a serious spiritual frame, fitting the soul to receive the sanctifying impressions of an outward revelation. They think that reading of sacred Scripture, and forming from thence right notions of Christianity, in order to talk of it, with a going the round of common duties, and a not being guilty of common sins, is the whole of the Christian religion, and all the meetness that is necessary for heaven. A serious heavenly frame, suitable to the true notion of revelation, has no place in them; they ridicule it in others, and name it affectation, rather than any real part of Christianity.

"An ingenious mind may argue for God against the atheist; for Christ against the Socinian; and for the outward testimony of the Spirit of Christ against the deist; and he himself be no real Christian: but no person can well display this inward testimony of Christ in the soul, without the experience of it."*

* To teach the HEARTS of others, the heart of the teacher must have had experience of the holy agency, or with respect to real edification in Christianity, his disciples will go empty away. Jam hic videte magnum sacramentum, Fratres. Magisteria forinsecùs adjutoria quædam sunt et admonitiones; CATHEDRAM IN CŒLO HABET QUI CORDA DOCET.—*Here, brethren, you see a great and holy mystery. Instruction from externals are great assistances, and afford much useful admonition; but he, who teacheth the heart, hath his seat, from which he gives his lessons, in heaven.* AUGUST. *Tr.* 3. *in* 1 *Joan.*

SECTION XVI.

Dr. Townson's Opinions on the Evidence which is in this Book recommended as superior to all other.

THE author from whom the following testimony is taken, was honoured for the book in which it is inserted, with his doctor's degree, by diploma from Oxford, a proof that it has in it nothing fanatical; and I should be wanting in duty to my young reader, if I did not recommend to his perusal the admirable discourses of Dr. Townson on the four gospels. He has removed many difficulties in them, and may therefore remove some prejudices which tend to obstruct the reception of the sublime and consolatory doctrine of this volume.

"If the word was enforced by miracles in the times only of its early publication, it has the standing support and evidence of another power, which is still as operative, where we will allow it, as ever. This is declared and promised in the following passage: *Jesus answered them and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.*

"The person who enters on the study of a science, of which he has only a general idea, must receive many things at first on the authority of his instructors. And surely there is no one, who, by his life and works, has such claim to trust and confidence in his words as the Author and Finisher of our faith. If then we really desire to know the certainty of his doctrine; if we have the courage to sacrifice meaner pursuits to the wisdom that is from above, and the

felicity of attaining it; we shall study the truth of his religion as he directs, by the practice of its laws.* And this method, he assures us, will yield us the repose and comfort of firm persuasion. Continuing steadfast in such a course of discipline, we shall not seek after signs from heaven, nor ask to behold the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the deaf hear, or the dead raised up. The healing efficacy and blessed influence of the gospel will sufficiently vouch for its truth and excellence.

"The evidence which thus possesses the soul is not liable to be impaired by time, as might an impression once made on the senses; but will shine more and more unto a perfect day. For the practice of religion, by purifying the heart, will raise and improve the understanding to conceive more clearly and judge more rightly of heavenly things and divine truths: the view and contemplation of which will return upon the heart the warmth of livelier hopes and more vigorous incitements to obedience; and effectual obedience will feel and testify that it is the finger of God.

"For is nature able, by its own efficiency, to clear the eyes of the mind; to rectify the will; to regulate the affections; to raise the soul to its noblest object, in love and adoration of God; to employ it steadily in its best and happiest exercise, justice and charity to man; to detach its desires from the pleasures, profits, and honours of the world; to exalt its views to heavenly things; to render the whole life godly, just, and sober? He, who impartially examines his own moral abilities by the pure and

* And to practise his laws we shall be enabled by what is called by Theologians "common grace." "Those divine influences, which leave the mind short of faith and sincere obedience, may be called common grace. These introduce special." DODDRIDGE.

searching light of the gospel, must discern their defects and weakness in every part; and when he well considers the tenor and spirit of this gospel, must acknowledge that he is not of himself sufficient for the attainments to which it calls and conducts its faithful votary.

"What then is it that hath taken him by the hand, and leads him on in this rising path of virtue and holiness; that prevents his steps from sliding; or if his foot hath slipped, raises him again; that keeps him steady in the right way; or, if at any time he hath wandered out of it, recalls him to it; that strengthens him to resist temptations, to endure toils, and so continue patiently in well-doing; that, as he advances, opens to his faith a still brightening view of the heavenly Jerusalem, through the gloom which our earthly state hangs upon death and futurity; and animates him to live and walk by this faith?

"If these are exertions beyond the sphere of mere human activity, the question, whence such improvement of soul and spirit and life proceeds, will admit of an easy and clear answer. It is God who blesses our earnest petitions that we may do his will, and our sincere endeavours to do it, with the GRACE OF HIS HOLY SPIRIT; who worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure; and thus verifies and fulfils the promises, made by Christ to those who ask in his name, of succour and strength from on high. Christ therefore is his beloved Son, by whom we are redeemed, and in whom we are accepted. The religion which he hath taught us, so worthy of God in the theory, and so favoured by him in the practice of its laws, proves its heavenly origin by the fruit it produces; and brings its divinity home to the breast of the devout professor by EXPERIENCE of its power unto salvation.

"It is natural to conclude, that he who has this conviction of its certainty will be desirous of persuading others to the belief and practice of it; and will be of an apt and fit disposition to instruct them in it." Thus it appears that Dr. Townson, like Dr. Jeremy Taylor, thinks that the teaching of the Spirit is the best instruction for the clergy, and "that the scholars of the university may become under this discipline most learned and most useful."*

There are scarcely any recent divines, whose opinions ought to have more weight than those of Dr. Townson. He lived, as he wrote, according to the true gospel. He is universally esteemed by the most learned and judicious theologists of the present day; and his opinions alone carry with them sufficient authority to justify me fully in recommending that evidence of the gospel truth which arises from divine influence, consequent on obedience to its precepts. An orthodox life, I am convinced, is the best preparative to the entertainment of orthodox opinions; and I rejoice to find such men as Townson enforcing the doctrine, "that if any man will do the will of Christ, he shall KNOW of the doctrine whether it be of God." He does not refer us to systematical or philosophical works, but to the teaching of the Holy Ghost, for the attainment of this knowledge; a knowledge, compared to which all other is to man, condemned as he is shortly to die, but puerile amusement, a house of cards, a bubble blown up into the air, and displaying bright but evanescent colours in a momentary sunshine.

* Vide Sect. VI.

SECTION XVII.

Dr. Doddridge on the Doctrine of Divine Influence.

It has been suggested, rather illiberally, that it was wrong to insert the testimonies of dissenting ministers, like those of Watts and Doddridge. I leave the world to judge; only taking the liberty to observe that these two eminent divines have ever been held in the highest esteem by the most respectable clergy of the church, and that either of them would have done honour to an archiepiscopal mitre. Dr. Doddridge's Lectures are, in my opinion, the very best introductory book which can be put into the hands of a young student (a real student) in divinity. Watts and Doddridge were a *par nobile* who did honour to human nature, and whom any denomination of Christians might have been proud to acknowledge.

"Any degree of divine influence," says Doddridge, "on the mind, inclining it to believe in Christ and to practise virtue, is called *grace*. All those who do indeed believe in Christ, and in the main practise virtue, are to ascribe it not merely or chiefly to their own wisdom and goodness, but to the special operation of divine grace upon their souls, as the original cause of it. None can deny, that God has such an access to the minds of men that he can work upon them in what manner he pleases: and there is great reason to believe, that his secret influence on the mind gives a turn to many of the most important events relating to particular persons and societies,* as it is evident many of the public revolutions, mentioned in the Old Testament,

* Prov. xxi. 1.

are ascribed to this cause.* Though the mind of men be not invincibly determined by motives, yet in matters of great importance it is not determined without them: and it is reasonable to believe, that where a person goes through those difficulties which attend faith and obedience, he must have a very lively view of the great engagements to them, and probably, upon the whole, a more lively view than another, who, in the same circumstances, in all other respects acts in a different manner. Whatever instruments are made use of as the means of making such powerful impressions on the mind, the efficacy of them is to be ascribed to the continual agency of the first cause. The prevalence of virtue and piety in the church is to be ascribed to God, as the great original Author, even upon the principles of natural religion. Good men in Scripture, who appear best to have understood the nature of God, and his conduct towards men, and who wrote under the influence and inspiration of his Spirit, frequently offer up such petitions to God, as show that they believed the reality and importance of his gracious agency upon the heart to promote piety and virtue.† God promises to produce such a change in the hearts of those to whom the other valuable blessings of his word are promised, as plainly implies that the alteration made in their temper and character is to be looked upon as his work.‡

"The Scripture expressly declares, in many places, that the work of faith in the soul is to be

* Ezra, i. 1. Religion of Nature delineated, p. 105—107.

† Psal. li. 10—12. xxxix. 4. xc. 12. cxix. 12. 18. 27. 33—37. 73. 80. 133. 1 Chron. xxix. 18, 19. Eph. i. 16, &c. Col. i. 9—11, &c. *sim.*

‡ Deut. xxx. 6. Psal. cx. 3. Jer. xxxi. 33. xxxii. 39, 40. Ezek. xi. 19, 20. xxxvi. 26, 27. Compare Heb. viii. 8—13.

ascribed to God, and describes the change made in a man's heart, when it becomes truly religious, in such language as must lead the mind to some strength superior to our own by which it is effected.* The increase of Christians in faith and piety, is spoken of as the work of God; which must more strongly imply that the first beginnings of it are to be ascribed to him.† The Scripture does expressly assert the absolute necessity of such divine influences on the mind, in order to faith and holiness, and speaks of God's giving them to one, while he withholds them from another, as the great reason of the difference to be found in the characters of different men in this important respect.‡

"It appears probable from the light of nature, and certain from the word of God, that faith and repentance are ultimately to be ascribed to the work of special grace upon the hearts of men.§ As to the manner in which divine grace operates upon the

* John, i. 13. iii. 3, 5, 6. Acts, xi. 18. xvi. 14. 2 Cor. iii. 3. Eph. i. 19, 20. ii. 1. 10. iv. 24. Phil. i. 29. Col. i. 11, 12. ii. 12, 13. *Vid.* James, i. 18. 2 Tim. ii. 25. To this catalogue we scruple not to add Eph. ii. 8. though some have objected that τουτο cannot refer to πιστεως; since the like change of genders is often to be found in the New Testament; compare Acts, xxiv. 16. xxvi. 17. Phil. i. 28. 1 John, ii. 8. Gal. iii. 16. iv. 19. Matth. vi. *ult.* xxviii. 19. Rom. ii. 14. Elsner's Observ. vol. i. p. 128. Raphel. Observ. *ex* Herod. in Matth. xxviii. 19. Glassii Op. l. iii. Tract ii. de pr. Can. xvi. p. 524—526.

† Psal. cxix. 32. Phil. i. 6. ii. 13. 1 Cor. vii. 25. iii. 7. iv. 7. xv. 10. 2 Cor. v. 5. Heb. xiii. 20, 21. 1 Pet. v. 10. Jude, ver. 24, 25.

‡ Duet. xxix. 4. Matth. xi. 25, 26. John, vi. 44, 45, 46. xii. 39, 40. Rom. ix. 18—23.

§ Lime-street Lect. vol. ii. p. 242—245. Tillotson's Works, vol. ii. p. 80, 81. Limb. Theol. l. iv. c. 14. § 4. 21. Brandt's Hist. of the Ref. vol. ii. p. 75. Dodderidge on Regen. Serm. vii. p. 221—233. Jortin's Six Dissertations, No. 1. Warburton's Doctrine of Grace. Fost. Sermons, vol. ii. No. 5. præf. p. 104, 105.

mind, considering how little it is we know of the nature and constitution of our own souls, and of the frame of nature around us, it is no wonder that it should be unaccountable to us.* Perhaps it may often be, by impelling the animal spirits or nerves, in such a manner as is proper to excite certain ideas in the mind with a degree of vivacity, which they would not otherwise have had: by this means various passions are excited; but the great motives addressed to gratitude and love seem generally, if not always, to operate upon the will more powerfully than any other, which many divines have therefore chosen to express by the phrase of *delectatio victrix*."†

SECTION XVIII.

The Opinions of Mr. Locke and Mr. Addison.

It will be difficult to prove that any of the modern worshippers of their own reason possess understandings better illuminated than those of the great ornaments of our country, Locke and Addison; and they have left on record their opinion on the reality

* John, iii. 8.

† This *delectatio victrix* is the pleasant sentiment which good men have ever felt when acting in obedience to God, and with a good conscience. Jansenius eam Christi gratiam.... non aliud esse vult, quam cœlestem quandam atque ineffabilem suavitatem, seu spiritualem delectationem, quâ voluntas prævenitur et flectitur ad volendum faciendumque quicquid Deus eam velle et facere constituerit. Le Blanc *Theses.*

Compare Deut. xxx. 6. Psal. cxix. 16. 20. 32. 47, 48. 97. 103. Psal. xix. 10, 11. 1 Rom. vii. 22. 1 John, iv. 18, 19. Rom. v. 5. Le Blanc's Thes. p. 527, § 53. Burn. Life of Roch. p. 43—51. Barclay's Apol. p. 148. Burnet on Art, p. 120. Whitby Comment. vol. ii. p. 289, 290. Scougal's Works, p. 6—10. Seed's Serm. vol. i. p. 291. Ridley on the Spirit, p. 210. King's Origin of Evil, p. 71. 376—380, fourth edition.

and necessity of supernatural assistance. It is evident, I think, that Mr. Locke's understanding and temper were very little inclined to admit any thing fanatical. He appears to have weighed well, in the balance of reason, whatever he advanced; and therefore his testimony may be supposed to have authority on the minds of those who, in forming their religious principles, lay claim to preeminent RATIONALITY.

Mr. Addison is universally allowed to have united in himself the scholar, the philosopher, and the gentleman. His liberal and polished mind always appeared to me peculiarly formed for theological subjects, and he treats them in a most pleasing and persuasive manner. Let us hear both these great men on our present subject.

"To these I must," says Mr. Locke, "add one advantage more we have by Jesus Christ, and that is, the promise of assistance. If we do what we can, he will give us his spirit to help us to do what, and how we should. It will be idle for us, who know not how our own spirits move and act us, to ask in what manner the Spirit of God shall work upon us. The wisdom that accompanies that spirit knows better than we how we are made, and how to work upon us. If a wise man knows how to prevail on his child, to bring him to what he desires, can we suspect that the spirit and wisdom of God fail in it, though we perceive or comprehend not the ways of his operation? Christ has promised it, who is faithful and just, and we cannot doubt of the performance. It is not requisite, on this occasion, for the enhancing of this benefit, to enlarge on the frailty of minds, and weakness of our constitutions; how liable to mistakes, how apt to go astray, and how easily to be turned out of the paths of virtue. If any one needs go beyond himself and the testimony of his

own conscience on this point; if he feels not his own errors and passions always tempting him, and often prevailing against the strict rules of his duty, he need but look abroad into any age of the world to be convinced. To a man under the difficulties of his nature, beset with temptations, and hedged in with prevailing custom, it is no small encouragement to set himself seriously on the courses of virtue and practice of true religion, that he is from a sure hand and an almighty arm promised assistance to support and carry him through."

Let us hear also Mr. Addison, a lay divine of the first order.

"We who have this veil of flesh standing between us and the world of spirits, must be content to know that the Spirit of God is present with us, by the effects which he produceth in us. Our outward senses are too gross to apprehend him; we may however taste and see how gracious he is, by his influence upon our minds, by those virtuous thoughts which he awakens in us, by those secret comforts and refreshments which he conveys into our souls, and by those ravishing joys and inward satisfactions which are perpetually springing up and diffusing themselves among all the thoughts of good men. *He is lodged in our very essence, and is as a soul within the soul, to irradiate its understanding, rectify its will, purify its passions, and enliven all the powers of man.* How happy therefore is an intellectual being, who, by prayer and meditation, by virtue and good works, opens this communication between God and his own soul! Though the whole creation frowns upon him, and all nature looks black about him, he has his light and support within him, that are able to cheer his mind, and bear him up in the midst of all those horrors which encompass him. He

knows that his helper is at hand, and is always nearer to him than any thing else can be, which is capable of annoying or terrifying him. In the midst of calumny or contempt, he attends to that Being who whispers better things within his soul, and whom he looks upon as his defender, his glory, and the lifter-up of his head. In his deepest solitude and retirement he knows that he is in company with the greatest of Beings; and perceives within himself such real sensations of his presence, as are more delightful than any thing that can be met with in the conversation of his creatures. Even in the hour of death he considers the pains of his dissolution to be nothing else but the breaking down of that partition which stands betwixt his soul and the sight of that Being, who is always present with him, and is about to manifest itself to him in fulness of joy.

" If we would be thus happy, and thus sensible of our Maker's presence, from the secret effects of his mercy and goodness, we must keep such a watch over all our thoughts, that, in the language of the Scripture, *his soul may have pleasure in us.* We must take care not to grieve his Holy Spirit, and endeavour to make the meditations of our hearts always acceptable in his sight, that he may delight thus to reside and dwell in us. The light of nature could direct Seneca to this doctrine in a very remarkable passage among his epistles: '*Sacer inest in nobis spiritus bonorum malorumque custos et observator, et quemadmodum nos illum tractamus, ita et ille nos.*'—There is a holy spirit residing in us, who watches and observes both good and evil men, and will treat us after the same manner that we treat him. But I shall conclude this discourse with those more emphatical words in divine revelation: '*If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father*

will love him, and we will come and make our abode with him."

I cannot help observing, that after the sour and bitter potions administered by the metaphysical sceptics of recent times, the pages of the Spectator seem to afford the heart a delicious aliment or a balsamic medicine. If men did not too much resemble the prodigal in the gospel, they would surely rejoice to feed on manna at their father's table, rather than on husks with swine.

SECTION XIX.

The Opinion of Soame Jenyns on the fundamental Principles of Christianity.

Mr. Jenyns was not a professional divine, but he was a man of a very acute intellect, and had doubtless examined the writings of the fashionable deists with attention. He had lived much in the world, and probably been attached to its prevailing modes of thinking; yet after all, he concluded his studies with publicly professing his belief of Christianity. It is impossible, consistently with common sense, to suspect such a man of ignorant fanaticism. He read with great powers of discernment the written gospels; and he was convinced that the doctrine of divine influence was clearly and indisputably taught in them. It is humbly hoped that the gay and fashionable world will attend to the opinions of one of their own fraternity.

"If Christianity," he observes in his Disquisitions, "is to be learned out of the New Testament, and words have any meaning affixed to them, the fundamental principles of it are these:

"That mankind came into this world in a depraved and fallen condition; that they are placed here for a while, to give them an opportunity to work out their salvation; that is, by a virtuous and pious life to purge off that guilt and depravity, and recover their lost state of happiness and innocence in a future life; that this they are unable to perform without the grace and assistance of God; and that, after their best endeavours, they cannot hope for pardon from their own merits, but only from the merits of Christ, and the atonement made for their transgressions by his sufferings and death. This is clearly the sum and substance of the Christian dispensation; and so adverse is it to all the principles of human *reason*, that if brought before her tribunal, it must inevitably be condemned. If we give no credit to its divine authority, any attempt to reconcile them is useless; and, if we believe it, presumptuous in the highest degree. To prove the reasonableness* of a revelation, is in fact to destroy it; because a revelation implies information of something which reason cannot discover, and therefore must be different from its deductions, or it would be no revelation."

The opinion of a professed wit and man of fashion may have weight with those who are prejudiced against professional divines. It has been doubted by many whether Mr. Jenyns was a sincere Chris-

* The great Mr. Locke is supposed to have done harm by his treatise "on the *Reasonableness of Christianity*." I will not assert so much; but I must observe, that as Mr. Locke maintained the doctrine of divine influence in that very treatise, it is clear that he did not think it unreasonable. Yet an appeal to reason only on matters of faith is as absurd as an appeal of sounds to the eye, or of colours to the ear. That matters of faith are above human comprehension, is a pretty good argument that they did not originate in human contrivance.

tian. I am inclined to believe that he was sincere. And as, in recommending Christianity, *it is right to become all things to all men, that we may save some*, his testimony is admitted in this place, though his lively manner of writing throws an air of levity on subjects, which, from their important nature, must always be considered as *grave* by all the partakers of mortality, who think justly and feel acutely.*

SECTION XX.

The Opinion of Bishop Horsley on the prevalent Neglect of teaching the peculiar DOCTRINES *of Christianity, under the Idea that* Moral Duties *constitute the Whole or the better Part of it. Among the* peculiar *Doctrines is evidently included that of Grace, which the Methodists inculcate, (as the Bishop intimates,)* not *erroneously.*

BISHOP Horsley has proved himself a mathematician and philosopher of the first rank, as well as a divine. All his works display singular vigour of intellect. He cannot be suspected of weak superstition or wild fanaticism. To the honour of Christianity, the editor of Newton, as well as Newton himself, is a firm supporter of its most mysterious doctrines. I desire the reader to weigh well the words of this able divine, as they were delivered in a charge to his clergy.

* Many, I find, continue to be sceptical on the subject of Mr. Jenyn's sincerity. It is impossible to penetrate the heart; but I ask what proof, or shadow of proof, appears in his pleasing little book on the Evidences of Christianity, that the author was insincere? I take the liberty of mentioning that the present Bishop of London, who was intimately acquainted with Mr. Jenyns, told me that he thought him an unfeigned believer.

But whether sincere or not, it appears clearly from this quotation, that he understood the gospel on the subject of the Holy Spirit's agency, in the same manner as I have done. His testimony, as that of a man of great sagacity, is valuable.

"A maxim has been introduced," says he, "that the laity, the more illiterate especially, have little concern with the mysteries of revealed religion, provided they be attentive to its duties; whence it hath seemed a safe and certain conclusion, that it is more the office of a Christian teacher to press the practice of religion upon the consciences of his hearers, than to inculcate and assert its doctrines.

"Again, a dread of the pernicious tendency of some extravagant opinions, which persons, more to be esteemed for the warmth of their piety than the soundness of their judgment, have grafted in modern times, upon the doctrine of justification by faith, as it is stated in the 11th, 12th, and 13th of the Articles of our church, (which, however, is no private tenet of the church of England, but the common doctrine of all the first reformers, not to say that it is the very corner-stone of the whole system of redemption,) a dread of the pernicious tendency of those extravagant opinions, which seem to emancipate the believer from the authority of all moral law, hath given general credit to another maxim; which I never hear without extreme concern from the lips of a divine, either from the pulpit or in familiar conversation; namely, that practical religion and morality are one and the same thing: that moral duties constitute the whole, or by far the better part, of practical Christianity.

"Both these maxims are erroneous. Both, so far as they are received, have a pernicious influence over the ministry of the word. The first most absurdly separates practice from the motives of practice. The second, adopting that separation, reduces practical Christianity to heathen virtue; and the two, taken together, have much contributed to divest our sermons of the genuine spirit and savour of

Christianity, and to reduce them to mere moral essays: in which moral duties are enforced, not, as indeed they might be to good purpose, by scriptural motives, but by such arguments as no where appear to so much advantage as in the writings of the heathen moralists, and are quite out of their place in a pulpit. The rules delivered may be observed to vary according to the temperament of the teacher. But the system chiefly in request, with those who seem the most in earnest in this strain of preaching, is the strict but impracticable, unsocial, sullen moral of the *Stoics*. Thus, under the influence of these two pernicious maxims, it too often happens that we lose sight of that which is our proper office, to publish the word of reconciliation, to propound the terms of peace and pardon to the penitent, and we make no other use of the high commission that we bear, than to come abroad one day in the seven, dressed in solemn looks, and in the external garb of holiness, to be the apes of Epictetus.

"The first of the two, which excludes the laity from all concern with the doctrinal part of religion, and directs the preacher to let the doctrine take its chance, and to turn the whole attention of his hearers to practice, must tacitly assume for its foundation (for it can stand upon no other foundation) this complex proposition: Not only that the practice of religious duties is a far more excellent thing in the life of man, far more ornamental of the Christian profession, than any knowledge of the doctrine without the practice; but, moreover, that men may be brought to the practice of religion without previous instruction in its doctrines; or in other words, that faith and practice are, in their nature, separable things. Now the former branch of this double assumption, that virtue is a more excellent thing in

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human life than knowledge, is unquestionably true, and a truth of great importance, which cannot be too frequently or too earnestly inculcated. But the second branch of the assumption, that faith and practice are separable things, is a gross mistake, or rather a manifest contradiction. Practical holiness is the end; faith is the means: and to suppose faith and practice separable, is to suppose the end attainable without the use of means. The direct contrary is the truth. The practice of religion will always thrive, in proportion as its doctrines are generally understood and firmly received; and the practice will degenerate and decay, in proportion as the doctrine is misunderstood or neglected. It is true, therefore, that it is the great duty of a preacher of the gospel to press the practice of its precepts upon the consciences of men; but then it is equally true, that it is his duty to enforce this practice in a particular way; namely, by inculcating its doctrines. The motives which the revealed doctrines furnish, are the only motives he has to do with, and the only motives by which religious duty can be effectually enforced.

"I am aware, that it has been very much the fashion, to suppose a great want of capacity in the common people, to be carried any great length in religious knowledge, more than in the abstruse sciences. That the world and all things in it had a maker; that the Maker of the world made man, and gave him the life which he now enjoys; that he who first gave life, can at any time restore it; that he can punish, in a future life, crimes which he suffers to be committed with impunity in this; some of these first principles of religion the vulgar, it is supposed, may be brought to comprehend. But the peculiar doctrines of revelation, the trinity of persons in the undivided Godhead; the incarnation of the second person; the

expiation of sin by the Redeemer's sufferings and death; the efficacy of his intercession; THE MYSTERIOUS COMMERCE OF THE BELIEVER'S SOUL WITH THE DIVINE SPIRIT; these things are supposed to be far above their reach. If this were really the case, the condition of man would indeed be miserable, and the proffer of mercy, in the gospel, little better than a mockery of their woe; for the consequence would be, that the common people could never be carried beyond the first principles of what is called natural religion. Of the efficacy of natural religion, as a rule of action, the world has had the long experience of 1600 years. For so much was the interval between the institution of the Mosaic church, and the publication of the gospel. During that interval, certainly, if not from an earlier period, natural religion was left to try its powers on the heathen world. The result of the experiment is, that its powers are of no avail. Among the vulgar, natural religion never produced any effect at all; among the learned, much of it is to be found in their writings, little in their lives. But if this natural religion, a thing of no practical efficacy, as experiment has demonstrated, be the utmost of religion which the common people can receive, then is our preaching vain, Christ died in vain, and man must still perish. Blessed be God! the case is far otherwise. As we have, on the one side, experimental proof of the insignificance of what is called natural religion; so, on the other, in the success of the first preachers of Christianity we have an experimental proof of the sufficiency of revealed religion to those very ends in which natural religion failed. In their success we have experimental proof that there is nothing in the great mystery of godliness, which the vulgar, more than the learned, want capacity to apprehend, since, upon the first preaching

of the gospel, the illiterate, the scorn of pharisaical pride, who knew not the law, and were therefore deemed accursed, were the first to understand, and to embrace the Christian doctrine.* * * *

"An over-abundant zeal to check the phrensy of the Methodists, first introduced that unscriptural language which confounds religion and morality.**** The great crime and folly of the Methodists consists not so much in heterodoxy, as in fanaticism; not in perverse doctrine, but rather in a disorderly zeal for the propagation of the truth.****Reason, till she has been taught by the lively oracles of God, knows nothing of the spiritual life, and the food brought down from heaven for its sustenance. By mere argument addressed to their reason, no conviction could be wrought in the minds of the common people of the very first principles of religion."

The learned Bishop here asserts, that "our sermons are often divested of the genuine spirit and savour of Christianity." If so, it is no wonder that our churches are forsaken and our religion despised. It is a truth, to which I have frequently been an eye-witness, that spacious churches in London, capable of containing thousands, are almost empty, notwithstanding the preachers every where inculcate excellent morality. Wherever indeed there appears, what the common people call, an evangelical preacher, the churches are so crowded, that it is difficult to gain admittance. The multitude hunger and thirst for the spiritual food; yet evangelical preaching is discouraged by many in high places, because it is said to favour of enthusiasm and to delude the vulgar. But it is this preaching alone which will preserve Christianity among us, and cause it to be considered as any thing better than a state-engine for the depression of the people.

SECTION XXI.

The Church of England teaches the true Doctrine of Grace.

In recommending to more general notice the doctrine of grace, I make no pretensions to a new discovery. It is obviously the doctrine of the Gospel; it is obviously the doctrine of the Church; it is fully acknowledged by all who sincerely use that form of prayer, which is established by the authority not only of those who composed it, but of those who ever since its composition, even to the present day, are voluntarily guided by it, in the performance of divine service.

Bishop Gibson, who was certainly a zealous friend to the church of England, has collected a number of passages from the liturgy, to show that the public offices of the church are duly regardful of the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit.

"In the daily service, we pray to God to grant us true repentance and his Holy Spirit—to replenish the king with the grace of his Holy Spirit—to endue the royal family with his Holy Spirit—to send down upon our bishops and curates, and all congregations committed to their charge, the *healthful Spirit of his grace*—that the Catholic Church may be guided and governed by his *good Spirit*, and that the fellowship of the *Holy Ghost* may be ever with us.

"In the litany we pray that God will *illuminate**

* Yet a high dignitary who, when in an inferior station had read this passage, in the parish churches, a thousand times, speaks *doubtingly* of the ILLUMINATING power of the Holy Spirit. He seemed to be a disciple of EDMUND LAW, who led the way to *liberal* thinking at Cambridge.

all bishops, priests, and deacons with the TRUE KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF HIS WORD—will endue us with the *grace* of his Holy Spirit, and that we may all bring forth the fruits of the Spirit.

"In the collects we pray that God will grant us the true circumcision of the Spirit, that our hearts and all our members being mortified from all worldly and carnal lusts, we may in all things obey his blessed will—that God will send his Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts the most excellent gift of charity—that we may ever obey the godly motions of the Spirit in righteousness and true holiness—that by his holy inspiration we may think those things that be good, and by his merciful guiding may perform the same—that God will not leave us comfortless, but send to us his Holy Ghost to comfort us—that by his Spirit we may have a right judgment in all things, and evermore rejoice in his holy comfort—that his Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts—that he will cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit.

"In the office for confirmation, we pray for the persons to be confirmed, that God will strengthen them with the Holy Ghost the Comforter, and daily increase in them his manifold gifts of grace, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength, the spirit of knowledge and true godliness—that he will fill them with the spirit of his holy fear—and that they may daily increase in his Holy Spirit more and more."

The articles of original sin, free-will, and justification evince that the church of England maintains the doctrine of light, sanctity, and life, derivable from the operation of the Holy Ghost. And there is a curious passage in a book, written by Archbishop Cranmer and the Committee of Divines, entitled

Necessary Erudition for a Christian Man, which fully declares, that, "besides many other evils that came by the fall of man, the high power of man's reason and freedom of will were wounded and corrupted; and all men thereby brought into such blindness and infirmity, that they cannot eschew sin, except they be illuminated and made free by an especial grace, that is to say, by a supernatural help and working of the Holy Ghost."*

There can be no doubt, in the mind of an impartial inquirer, that the church teaches the doctrine of supernatural influence in plain and strong terms; and that it derives it from the holy Scriptures. "For it is by the Spirit of wisdom that our understandings are enlightened: it is by the Spirit that we are rooted and grounded in love, and that our souls are purified in obeying the truth; it is by the Spirit that we are called unto liberty; for where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty; in a word, it is by the Spirit that all our infirmities are helped, and that we are strengthened with might in the inner man."†

"Without me," says Christ, "ye can do nothing." Our blessed Saviour opened the understandings of his disciples, that they might understand the Scriptures. The Lord opened the heart of Lydia, that she attended to the things that were spoken of Paul. The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. That the God of our Lord Jesus

* This book was published by order of Henry VIII. 1543, approved by the lords spiritual and temporal and the lower house of parliament, and dedicated by the king to all his faithful subjects.

† Eph. i. 17. 1 Pet. 22. Gal. v. 13. 2 Cor. iii. 17. Rom. viii. 26. Ephes. iii. 16, 17.

Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our heart, to give the light of knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.—No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.—For by grace ye are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.*

If there be meaning in words, these passages evince the reality and necessity of internal illumination from the great Fountain of light. And what says the homily of the church? "In reading of God's word, he most profiteth, not always that is most ready in turning of the book, or in saying of it without the book, but he that is most turned into it, that is, most inspired with the Holy Ghost." In the the same homily, a passage from Chrysostom is quoted to the following purport: "Man's human and worldly wisdom and science is not needful to the understanding of Scripture, but the revelation of the Holy Ghost, who inspireth the true meaning unto them that with humility and diligence do seek therefore."

In the ordination office, the bishop says to the candidates for priest's orders, "Ye cannot have a mind or will thereto of yourselves, for the will and ability is given of God alone. Therefore ye ought and have need to pray earnestly for the Holy Spirit. You will continually pray to God the Father, by the mediation of our only Saviour Jesus Christ, for the heavenly assistance of the Holy Ghost."

* John, xv. 5. Acts, xvi. 14. Ephes. i. 17, 18. 1 Cor. xii. 3. Luke, xxiv. 45. 1 Cor. ii. 14. 2 Cor. iv. 6.

A great number of citations might be brought to prove that the doctrine of grace or supernatural assistance* is established by the church of England in exact conformity to the Scriptures;† but it is not necessary to insist on a truth which is evident to every one who reads the Common-prayer book, the Articles, the Homilies, and compares them with the Gospels and Epistles.

* At the church of England ordination of every priest, the following hymn is appointed to be sung. I quote it not for the poetry but the doctrine.

Come, Holy Ghost, eternal God,
Proceeding from above,
Both from the Father and the Son,
The God of Peace and Love;
Visit our minds, and into us
Thy heavenly grace inspire, . . .
Thou art the very Comforter
In all woe and distress;
The heavenly gift of God most high,
Which no tongue can express.
The fountain and the lively spring
Of joy celestial;
The fire so bright, the love so clear,
And UNCTION spiritual.
O, Holy Ghost, into our wills
Send down thy heavenly LIGHT, &c.

Vide Ordination Service in the folio Liturgies used by the minister in the churches.

† It never can be consistent with the character of an *honest man* solemnly to subscribe to the doctrines of grace, seriously to pray in the church for divine influence, and then to teach and preach against the whole doctrine.

SECTION XXII.

On the Means of obtaining the Evidence *of Christianity, afforded by the Holy Spirit.*

I NOW come to the most important part of my subject. I have produced, as I intended, the weighty authority of great and good men, most eminent divines, to countenance and support me in recommending to the people, above all other evidence, the evidence of the Holy Ghost, to the truth of Christianity. After the suffrages of such men in favour of this sublime doctrine, no man can justly call it heterodox or improperly enthusiastical. I could indeed cite many other most respectable authorities; but I have already far exceeded the just limits of quotation. It now remains to point out more expressly (though much in this way has been incidentally done already) the means of obtaining this evidence.

FAITH IS THE GIFT OF GOD.* To the Giver only it belongs to prescribe the means of obtaining his bounty. He has prescribed the WRITTEN WORD and PRAYER. *Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the* WORD OF GOD.† But the whole tenour of the gospel proves, that the written word has not efficacy of itself to convince our understandings, nor reform our hearts; to produce either faith in God or repent-

* Eph. ii. 8. To you it is GIVEN, says St Paul, to *believe* on Christ. Phil. i. 29. To some it was given to understand the mysteries of the kingdom, and to others it was not given. Matt. xiii. 11.

† Rom. x. 17. We must earnestly pray in the words of St. Paul, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, would give unto us the spirit of wisdom and revelation; the eyes of our understanding being enlightened. Eph. i. 17.

ance from dead works, without the aid of the Holy Ghost.

Now the aid of the Holy Ghost is promised to prayer: "If ye," says our Saviour, "being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall God give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

The Holy Spirit, it appears from this passage, is the best gift, which the best, wisest, and most powerful of Beings can bestow on man, and he has promised it those who ask it with faith and humility:—an easy condition of obtaining the greatest comfort of which the heart is capable, together with full evidence of the truth of Christianity.

But do the philosophical inquirers into the truth of Christianity seek its evidence in this manner? Do they lift up their hearts in supplication? It appears rather that they trust to their own power, than to the power of God. They take down their folios, they have recourse to their logic, their metaphysics, nay even their mathematics,* and examine the mere historical and external evidence with the eyes of literary criticism and Pagan philosophy. The unbelievers, on the other hand, do the same; and, as far as wit and subtle reasoning goes, there are many who think that a Tindal and a Collins were more than equal to a Clarke and a Coneybeare. There is no doubt but that infidelity is diffused by theological controversy, whenever the illumination of the Spirit, the sanctity of the gospel, is entirely laid aside, and the whole

* See Ditton, Andrew Baxter, Huet, Dr. Daniel Scott, and many others, who undertake to demonstrate, almost geometrically, the truth of the gospel, the resurrection, or the doctrine of the Trinity. We should not be taught by St. Paul's example to pray for illumination, unless it were likely to be given to us as the consequence of fervent and faithful prayer, accompanied with study or meditation.

cause left to the decision of human wit and invention.

He that would be Christian indeed, and not merely a disputant or talker about Christianity, must seek better evidence than man, short-sighted as he is with the most improved sagacity, ignorant as he is with the deepest learning, can by any means afford. He must, in the words of the Psalmist,* "*open his mouth and draw in the Spirit.*" The Holy Ghost will give him the spirit of supplication,† which will breathe out in prayer, and inhale from him who first inspired the *divine particle*,‡ fresh supplies of grace. He must *continue instant in prayer.* This will preserve his mind in a state fit to receive the Holy Visitant from on high, who brings with him balsam for the heart, and light for the understanding. The result will be full evidence of Christianity, full confidence in Jesus Christ, joy and peace on earth, and a lively hope of salvation. What a sunshine must a mind in such a state enjoy: how different from the gloominess of the sceptic or unbeliever; how superior to the coldness of the mere disputant in scholastic or sophistical divinity! Such a man may not take degrees in an university and be clothed in scarlet, yet may he be crowned with celestial glory, and have his name recorded in the book of life. If he turn many to righteousness, he may shine as a light in the firmament for ever.

With respect to the efficacy of prayer in bringing down the assistance, the illumination of the Holy Ghost, not merely in teaching doctrinal notions, but in directing the actual conduct of life, let us hear the declaration of Lord Chief Justice Hale, whose example I select, because he was a layman, a man

* Psal. cxix. 131. † Zach. xii. 10.

‡ Divinæ particulam auræ. Hor.

deeply conversant in the business of the world, a great lawyer, and therefore may contribute to prove, that they who value themselves on their worldly sagacity, and frequently consider the affairs of religion as trifles, compared with the contests for property and the concerns of jurisprudence, need not, in the most active life and most exalted stations, be ashamed of the gospel of Christ.

"I can call," says he, "my own experience to witness, that even in the external actions, occurrences, and incidents of my whole life, I was never disappointed of the best guidance and direction, when in humility, and a sense of deficiency, and diffidence of my own ability to direct myself, or to grapple with the difficulties of my life, I have implored the secret guidance of the divine Wisdom and Providence."*

SECTION XXIII.

Temperance necessary to the Reception and Continuance of the Holy Spirit in the Heart, and consequently to the Evidence of Christianity afforded by Divine Illumination.

THE Apostle says, *Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with* SPIRIT.† The word

* One can hardly doubt but that Socrates was favoured with supernatural assistance, which was his DÆMON; and, if he was, he probably obtained it by prayer.

Ην ο βιος Σωκρατους μεστος ευχης.—The life of Socrates was full of prayer.

Η οιει τουτο ευξετο Σωκρατης, οπως αυτω χρήματα γενοιτο, η οπως αρχη αθηναιων; αλλ' ευξετο τοις Θεοις αρετην ψυχης, και ησυχιαν βιου, και ζωην αμεμπτον, και ευελπιν θανατον.—Do you think that Socrates prayed that wealth might fall to his lot, or that he might possess power over the Athenians, and gratify his ambition? No; he prayed the Gods for virtue of the mind, tranquillity, a blameless life, and death full of hope. MAXIM. TYR. Diss. 30.

† Eph. v. 18.

ασωτια in the original, here rendered *excess*, corresponds with the Latin *prodigalitas*, which in the Roman law characterised the spendthrift and debauchee, incapable, from his vices, of managing his own affairs, and therefore placed by the prætor under the guardianship of trustees, without whose concurrence he could perform no legal act.* He was considered as an infant and an idiot. The words of the Apostle may then be thus paraphrased: "Be not intemperate in wine, because intemperance will destroy your reason, and degrade you to a state of infantine imbecility, without infantine innocence; but be filled with the Spirit; that is, let your reason be exalted, purified, clarified to the highest state by the co-operation of the divine reason, which cannot be, if you destroy the natural faculties which God has given you, by drunkenness and gluttony."

I think it evident, from this passage, as well as from the conclusions of reason and experience, that all excess tends to exclude the radiance of grace. The mental eye is weakened by it, and cannot bear the celestial lustre.†

That great master of reasoning, Aristotle, maintained that *pleasures* are corruptive of *principles* (φθαρτικαι των αρχων); and many of the ancients were of opinion, that vice disqualified for philosophical pursuits, where the object was merely terrestrial and human, by raising a mist round the understanding, such as the rays of truth could not penetrate. It was

* See Dr. Powel's Sermon on the text.

† Ωσπερ οφθαλμω λημωντι, και ου κεκαθαρμενω, τα σφοδρα φωτεινα εδειν ουκ οιοντε· ουτω και τη ψυχη μη την αρετην κεκτημενη, το της αληθειας ενοπτρισασθαι καλλος. As it is impossible for an eye, labouring under a malady which causes a defluxion, to see clearly any very bright and brilliant object, till the impurity is removed; so it is for the mind, unpossessed of virtue, to reflect the beautiful image of truth. HIEROCLES, *in Præf. ad Pythag.*

for this cause that one of them maintained "*juvenis non est idoneus moralis philosophiæ auditor;*" that, though youth is most in want of moral instruction, yet, from the violence of its passions, and its usual immersion in sensuality, it was the least qualified to comprehend, he does not say to adopt or follow but even to understand, the doctrines of moral philosophy.

One of our own philosophers,* who in many respects equalled the ancients, justly observes, "That anger, impatience, admiration of persons, or a pusillanimous over-estimation of them, desire of victory more than of truth, too close an attention to the things of this world, as riches, power, dignities, immersion of the mind into the body, and the slaking of that noble and divine fire† of the soul by intemperance and luxury; all these are very great enemies to all manner of knowledge, as well natural as divine."

I therefore earnestly recommend it to every serious man, who wishes to be convinced of Christianity, to consider it in the morning,‡ before either the cares of the world, or the fumes of that intemperance§ which conviviality sometimes occasions,

* Dr. Henry More.

† *Igneus ille vigor.*—That energy resembling fire.

‡ Those that seek me *early (manè)* shall find me.

PROVERBS, viii. 17.

§ *Si præceptor,* HOMO, *gravatur* homini *disciplinam humanam committere, puta dialecticen aut arithmeticen, somnolento, oscitanti, aut* crapulâ *gravato; quanto magis* SAPIENTIA CŒLESTIS *dedignabitur loqui voluptatum hujus mundi amore temulentis, cœlestium rerum neglectu, nauseantibus?*—If a preceptor, a mere man, hesitates to give merely human instruction; for instance, lectures on logic or arithmetic, to a pupil who is drowsy, who yawns, or who is sick with the intemperance of yesterday; how much more will the heavenly Wisdom disdain to speak with those who are drunk with the pleasures of the world, and who, from a total neglect of heavenly things, sicken at the mention of them? ERASMUS.

blunt the feelings of the heart, and spread a film over the visual nerve of the mental eye.* Devotion, pouring forth *early in the morning* her orisons of humility and gratitude, would greatly conduce to the happiness of men and the reformation of society. According to the present system of luxurious indolence, many rise from their pillow at noon, with no other apparent view than to trifle away an hour or two, till the time comes for plunging again into the intemperance of the banquet, continued with little intermission till the midnight bell, when tired nature sinks from mere weariness to repose, without inclination or ability for reflection.

SECTION XXIV.

On improving AFFLICTIONS *duly as a Means of Grace and Belief in the Gospel.—Humility requisite to the Reception of divine Influence.*

A CELEBRATED divine,† on his recovery from a severe fit of sickness, is reported to have said, "I have learned, under this sickness, to KNOW SIN AND GOD." He had studied divinity, during many years, with great attention; he had prayed and preached with great ardour; yet he acknowledges, that till the affliction of sickness visited him, he was unacquainted with those important subjects, sin and God; subjects which he had so frequently considered in private, and discoursed upon before an admiring audience.

It is good for me that I have been afflicted, said one, who had sinned egregiously in his prosperous days, and who was rendered wise by adversity.

Afflictions, if suffered to have their perfect work

* *Verum hæc* impransus.—These let him learn before the fumes of indigestion cloud over the faculties. HOR.

† Oecolampadius.

will certainly become the means of grace, cause belief in the consolatory gospel, and ultimately lead to salvation. The wandering mind returns, like the prodigal son, when under the pressure of distress, to the bosom of its father. The kind father goes forth to meet it on its return, and the interview happily terminates in perfect love and reconciliation.

More have been convinced of the truth of Christianity by a severe illness, a great loss, a disappointment,* or the death of one whom the soul loved, than by all the defences, proofs, and apologies which have ever been produced in the most celebrated schools of theology. The heart was opened, and rendered soft and susceptible by sorrow, and the dew of divine grace enabled to find its way to the latent seeds of Christian virtue.

Such being the beneficial effect of afflictions, it is

* *Le moment de la* GRACE, *c'est une humiliation qui Dieu vous envoie, et qui vous* éloigne du monde, *parceque vous n'y pouvez plus paroître avec honneur. C'est la disgrace d'un maître à qui une lâche complaisance vous faisoit en mille rencontres sacrifier les intérêts de votre conscience; le changement d'un ami dont le commerce trop fréquent vous entraînoit dans le vice, et vous y entretenoit. C'est* une perte de biens, une maladie, un chagrin domestique *ou* étranger; *ce sont des* souffrances; *tout,* HORS DIEU, *devient* AMER; *on ne trouve plus de* consolation *que dans* lui; *et rebuté des choses humaines, on commence à* GOUTER LES CHOSES DU CIEL.—The season of Grace is, when God sends you some humiliating affliction, which withdraws you from the world, because you can no longer appear in it with honour. It is some disgrace thrown upon you by a master, to whom a base obsequiousness led you, in a thousand struggles, to sacrifice the interests of your conscience. It is the alienation of a friend, your connection with whom too often led you into the snares of vice, and kept you there. It is the loss of property, it is a disease, an uneasiness either domestic or from without; it is a state of suffering, when every thing, but God, becomes bitter to a man, when he finds no consolation but within himself; and when, disgusted with the vanity and vexation of human affairs, he begins to taste the sweetness of things heavenly. BRETONNEAU.

much to be lamented, that many will not suffer them to operate favourably on their dispositions, and thus counteract, by the good they may ultimately produce, the pain which they immediately inflict. They fly from solitude, they banish reflection. They drink the cup of intoxication, or seek the no less inebriating draft of dissipating pleasure. Thus they lose one of the most favourable opportunities of receiving those divine impressions which would give them COMFORT under their afflictions, such as the world cannot give; and afford them such conviction as would render them Christians indeed, and lead to all those beneficial consequences of faith, which are plainly represented in the Scripture.

Humility, a virtue to be produced in some men solely by affliction, unites a man to all other men. Pride would fain build a high wall of separation between itself and all the human race, especially all in the lower ranks of society. But humility sees a brother in a beggar and a negro; a brother born of woman and subject to many infirmities and sufferings, and travelling to the grave. HUMILITY is therefore the source of CHARITY and every other Christian virtue. No wonder, indeed, since *God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the* HUMBLE.

SECTION XXV.

On Devotion—a Means, as well as an Effect, of Grace—no sincere Religion can subsist without it.

MANY theologists, who have written in defence of Christianity with the acuteness of an Aristotle, and the acrimony of a Juvenal, against all sorts of infidels and heretics, seem to have forgotten one very material part of religion—that which consists of

devotional sentiment, and the fervours of a sincere piety. Some of them appear to reprobate, and hold it in abhorrence. They inveigh against it as enthusiasm; they laugh at it as the cant of hypocrisy. Such men have the coldness of Bishop Butler, without the ingenuity; the contentious spirit of Dr. Bentley, without the wit or erudition.

True religion cannot exist without a considerable degree of devotion. On what is true religion founded but on LOVE—the love of God, and the love of our neighbour? And with respect to the love of God, what says our Saviour? Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. No language can more expressly and emphatically describe the ardour of devotion. Out of the heart the mouth speaketh. If the heart feels the love of God, in the degree which our Saviour requires, the language of prayer and thanksgiving will be always glowing, and, on extraordinary occasions, even rapturous.

The *effectual* FERVENT *prayer of a righteous man availeth much;* if it be not *fervent,* it cannot be *sincere,* and therefore cannot be expected to avail. Love must add wings to prayer, to waft it to the throne of grace.

"Man has a principle of love implanted in his nature, a magnetism of passion,"* by which he constantly attaches himself to that which appears to him good and beautiful; and what so good, what so beautiful, as the archetype and model of all excellence? Shall he conceive the image, and not be charmed with its loveliness?

Worship or adoration implies lively affection. If it be cold, it is a mere mockery, a formal compliance

* Norris.

with customs for the sake of decency. It is a lip-service, of which knaves, hypocrites, and infidels are capable, and which they render for the sake of temporal advantage.

Will any man condemn the ardour which the Scriptures themselves exhibit? Must they not be allowed to afford a model for imitation? And are they written in the cold, dull style of an academical professor, lecturing in the schools of divinity? No; they are written in warm, animated, metaphorical, and poetical language; not with the precision of the schoolmen; not with the dryness of system-makers; but with florid, rhetorical, impassioned appeals to the feelings and imagination. What are the PSALMS, but ebullitions of passion, sorrow, joy, love, and gratitude?

The truth is, that the most important subject which can be considered by man, must, if considered with seriousness and sincerity, excite a warm interest. The fire of devotion may not, indeed, be equably supported, because such equability is not consistent with the constitution of human nature; but it will, for the most part, burn with a clear and steady flame, and will certainly, at no time, and in no circumstances, be utterly extinguished.

Where the heart is deeply interested, there will be eagerness and agitation. Suppose a man, who speaks, in the church, of the Holy Ghost, and other most important religious subjects, with perfect *sang froid*, repairing to the Stock-exchange, and just going to make a purchase. The price fluctuates. Observe how he listens to his broker's reports. His cheeks redden, and his eyes sparkle. Here he is in earnest. Nature betrays his emotion. It is not uncharitable to conclude that his heart is literally with his treasure; and that with respect to the

riches of divine grace, he values them little; and, like Gallio, *careth for none of these things.* View him again, at a great man's levee, and see with what awe he eyes a patron. His attention approaches to adoration. He is tremblingly solicitous to please, and would undergo any painful restraint, rather than give the slightest offence. The world will not condemn, but applaud his anxiety; yet, if he is earnest and fervent, when his interest is infinitely greater, in securing the tranquillity of his mind, under all the changes and chances of life, he is despised as an enthusiast, a bigot, a fool, or a madman.

With what warmth and impetuosity do some men speak and write on political subjects! We all remember a very ingenious and honourable, but ambitious man, (on the brink of the grave, and with a heart bleeding with the sorest laceration for the loss of a son,) declaiming with a degree of ardour in favour of war, which, if it had appeared in defence of the gospel of peace, would have been called by the world extremely fanatical.

A man of sense and true goodness will certainly take care not to make an ostentation of his devotional feelings; but at the same time he will beware of suppressing, in his endeavour to moderate and conceal them.

He will never forget, that yonder sun, which emits light over the universe, diffuses, at the same time, a genial heat, that enlivens and cherishes all nature.

SECTION XXVI.

*On Divine Attraction.**

SHALL we believe our Saviour himself, or some poor mortal, who has learned a little Greek, Latin, or Hebrew, and upon the strength of his scanty knowledge of those languages,† and a little verbal criticism, picked up in the schools of an university, assumes the pen of a controversialist, and denies the evident meaning of words plainly and emphatically spoken by Jesus Christ? Our Saviour says, in language particularly direct, "No man can come unto me, except the Father, which hath sent me, DRAW HIM."

Faustus Regiensis, Wolzogenius, Brenius, Slichtingius, Sykes, Whitby, Clarke, and many others, endeavour to explain away the meaning of the word DRAW (ελκυση) because they have taken a side in the party polemics of Theology, against the doctrine of Divine Grace.

But what have we to do with Faustus, Wolzogenius, Slichtingius, and the rest, when we have before us the words of JESUS CHRIST? By them it appears that there is an ATTRACTION in the spiritual world, as well as the natural; and that the Spirit of

* The soi-disant *Rationalists* do not like this title; but I must beg leave to inform them that it is taken from Dr. Isaac Barrow. See the preceding quotation from that great divine.

† "*There are two ways of embracing Christianity*; the one is as a SINNER, the other as a SCHOLAR." Some *scholars* take up the New Testament to write their observations upon it in the same spirit as they take up *Anacreon, Ovid, Catullus, Martial,* Petronius, SHAKSPEARE, COWLEY; and sometimes comment on St. Paul with the same arrogance and self-conceit as on Sir John Falstaffe and Dame Quickly.

God, a benign philanthropic Spirit, unites itself to the soul of man, and communicates to it comfort, sanctity, and illumination.

Men do not controvert the received systems of natural philosophy. They believe in the attraction of gravitation, cohesion, magnetism, and electricity. But in this there is no visible agency, no sensible efflux, influx, or impulse. Yet they believe it, and certainly with reason; but why should they think that God acts thus on matter, comparatively vile, and leaves mind uninfluenced? Mind, that pure, ethereal essence, which must be said to approach in its nature to Divinity, (if man can conceive any thing of divine,) and which has an inborn tendency to assimilate with its like.

God, we are told in Scripture, is love. But love always attaches itself to its object. It is not compatible with love to be selfish and solitary. It delights in assimilation. The spirit of that God who is love, still unites itself with man, for whom it has already shown so much affectionate regard, in the creation and redemption. It could not be consistent with the love and mercy of God to man, to leave him entirely, for ages, without any intercourse, any light, any communication, but a written word, in a language unknown, unread by many, and which, without Divine interposition, might be corrupted by the wickedness of man, or lost by his negligence. God's Spirit, acting upon the soul of man, at this hour and for ever, is a living, energetic, and everlasting gospel. The promise of God's assistance by his Spirit, (as St. Peter assured the first converts to Christianity,) was unto them, and unto their children, and to all that were afar off,*

* Acts, ii. 39.

their successors to the remotest ages, *even to as many as the Lord their God should call.*

Man must be ATTRACTED to God by the Spirit of love in the Divine nature, or else he ceases to be in the Christian system; and what may be the consequence to the soul in its aberration, is known only to him who knoweth all things. But surely every thinking mortal will gladly follow the Divine attraction, since it will draw him from this low vale, where sin and sorrow abound, up to the realms of bliss eternal; and afford him, during his earthly pilgrimage, the sweetest solace.

The human soul assimilating with the Divine, is the drop of water gravitating to the ocean, from which it was originally separated; and cohering with it as soon as it comes within the sphere of its attraction; it is the child clinging to the bosom of its parent; it is the wandering, weary exile hastening with joy to his native home. Let us endeavour to cherish an inclination for reunion; let us follow all the known means of accomplishing it, and it will be finally and completely effected by the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Love.*

* Let us hear a Heathen philosopher speak on the union between God and good men.

Inter bonos viros ac Deum amicitia est, conciliante virtute; amicitiam dico? etiam necessitudo et similitudo.—Between good men and God there subsists a friendship, under the mediation of virtue; a friendship do I say? It is more. It is an intimate union and resemblance. SENECA.

SECTION XXVII.

On the Difficulties of Scripture.

In his solis literis, et quod non assequor, tamen adoro.—*In this part of literature alone, even what I do not understand, I yet revere.*

If there is any thing in human affairs to be approached with awe, and viewed with veneration, it is the written word of revelation. Acknowledged sanctity and long duration combine to throw an air of divinity around it. It is worthy to be kept in the holy of holies. But I cannot agree with those zealous votaries who pretend either that there are no difficulties in it, or that they are all removable by the light of learning. I confess that criticism has removed many difficulties; but I am convinced that many still remain, which, I fear, will never give way to human sagacity. There they must remain, with all the majesty of clouds and darkness around them, till the Sun of righteousness shall appear in his full glory.

But shall difficulties cause disbelief? Are there then no difficulties in the world of nature, as well as in the world of grace? I cannot step into the garden or the meadow, I cannot cast my eyes to the horizon, without encountering difficulties. Yet I believe the existence of the things I see there, and I am led from the observation of general good, mixed with partial evil, to conclude, that verily there is a God. I conclude in the same manner, from what I do understand and know to be good in the gospel, that verily, Jesus is the Christ; and that the parts of the gospel which I do not comprehend, are good, because

those which I am able to understand are so beyond all doubt and comparison.

All that is necessary to my happiness in the gospel is sufficiently clear. I learn there that the HOLY GHOST is vouchsafed to me and to all men, now and till time shall be no more. This I consider as the LIVING GOSPEL. This supplies all defects, if any there should be, in the written word; and the dark and unintelligible parts of the gospel, surrounded by celestial radiance, become like spots in the sun, which neither deform its beauty, nor diminish its lustre. I am not therefore offended by them; I bow to them with reverence, as to sacred things upon the altar, covered with a veil from the eyes of mortal or profane intrusion. It is enough that I have learned, in the gospel, many moral truths; and this one great truth, that God Almighty, at this moment, pours an emanation of himself into the souls of all who seek the glorious gift by fervent prayer, and endeavour to retain it by obedience to his will. It is enough: why need I perplex my understanding with searching into those *secret things which belong unto the Lord;* or acquire a minute, cavilling habit, which never can discover any thing on this subject of more importance than that which I already know; but which, if indulged presumptuously, may lead me to scepticism, and terminate in infidelity;* Some parts of the holy volume are sealed: I shall in vain attempt to burst them open: but I will not condemn what I cannot understand. I will wait with patience and humility for God's good time. In the interval I will rejoice; and my flesh shall rest in hope; because I have been admitted to

* *Titubabit fides, si vacillet Scripturarum divinarum auctoritas.*— Faith will totter, if the authority of the divine Scriptures is shaken. *Aug. de Christ. Doct.* lib. i. c. 37.

inspect the book, and have learned that the Spirit still attends the written word, ministering at this hour, and illuminating, with the lamp of Heaven, whatever darkness overshadows the path of life.

This persuasion adds new glory to the written gospel.* It throws a heavenly lustre over the page. The holy book is not left alone to effect the great purpose of man's recovery; so that, whatever difficulties or defects it may be allowed to retain, by the wise providence of God, the difficulties will be removed, and the defects supplied, so far as to accomplish the great end, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, which accompanies it in its progress down the stream of time, like the pillar of fire, attending the children of Israel.†

* The written Gospel, like the Apostles, may plant and water, but it is God that giveth the increase.

† *Οσοι υιοι εισι του φωτος και της διακονιας της καινης διαθηκης εν τω πνευματι αγιω,* ΘΕΟΔΙΔΑΚΤΟΙ ΕΙΣΙΝ· *αυτη γαρ η χαρις επιγραφει εν ταις καρδιαις αυτων τους νομους του πνευματος· ουκ οφειλουσιν ουν εις τας γραφας μονον τας δια μελανος γεγραμμενας πληροφορειθαι, αλλα και εις τας πλακας της καρδιας η χαρις του Θεου εγγραφει τους νομους του πνευματος και τα επουρανια μυστηρια.*—As many as are the sons of the light, and of the ministration of the New Testament in the Holy Spirit, are taught of God; for grace itself inscribes upon their hearts the laws of the Spirit. They are not therefore indebted to the Scriptures only, to the word written with ink, for their Christian perfection; but the grace of God writes upon the tablet of their hearts the laws of the Spirit, and the mysteries of heaven. Macarius in Homil. 15.

"How doth the Holy Ghost reveal unto us the truth of the Scriptures? I answer, by removing those impediments that hindered, and by bestowing those graces that make us capable of this knowledge. There is in us a two-fold impediment; first, *Ignorance*, by which our eyes are closed that we cannot see the light; secondly, *Corruption*, by which, though we see the light, yet we cannot but naturally hate it and turn from it. The Holy Spirit cures both by a double remedy; first, of illumination, restoring our understanding to some part of its primitive perfection; secondly, of sanctification, infusing into our desires and affections some degrees of their primitive holiness and purity." Pemble.

SECTION XXVIII.

The OMNIPRESENCE *of God a Doctrine universally allowed; but how is God every where present but by his Spirit, which is the* HOLY GHOST?

Ουδεν Θεων κενον.—Nothing is without Deity. MARC. ANTONIN.

THEY who maintain, if there be any such, that God having, about eighteen hundred years ago, signified his will to mankind, has ever since that time withdrawn his agency from the human mind, do, in effect, deny the omnipresence, and with it the omniscience, providence, and goodness of the Deity. But what say the Scriptures? He is not far from every one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our being.*

But is it to be believed, that when he is thus intimately present with us, he either cannot, or will not, influence our sentiments? Why is he thus present? or why should he confine his agency over us to a little book, in a foreign and dead language, which many never see at all, which more cannot read, which none can perfectly understand; and concerning the literal meaning of the most important doctrinal parts of which, the most learned and judicious are to this hour divided in opinion?

The heathens† had more enlarged and worthier ideas of the divine nature. They indeed believed

* Acts, xvii. 27.

† *Ipse* Deus HUMANO GENERI *ministrat; ubique et omnibus præsto est.*—God himself administers to the human race; he is pesent every where, and to every man. SENECA EPIST.

Quocunque te flexeris, ibi illum videbis occurrentem tibi. Nihil ab illo vacat. Opus suum ipse implet.—Whichever way you turn, you will meet God. Nothing is without him. He fills his own work completely. SENEC. DE BENEFIC. lib. iv. cap. 8.

in supernatural agency on the mind of man; though they disgraced their belief by the absurdities of polytheism. Every part of the universe was peopled by them with supernatural agents, and the most distinguished among them believed their virtuous sentiments inspired, and their good actions directed by a tutelar deity. I dwell not upon the instance of Socrates's Demon;* and I only mention the topic, to prove that the doctrine is not likely to be very

* It is worth while, however, to insert the following fine passage from Plato, in which Socrates asserts the necessity of supernatural agency, in removing a dark cloud from the human mind, previously to its being able to learn how to regulate conduct, either towards gods or men. Reason, till this dark cloud should be removed by Divine Providence, he thought incapable of discovering either moral or divine truth with certainty.

S. Ἀναγκαῖον ἔν ἐστι περιμένειν ἕως ἂν τις μάθῃ ὡς ἓει πρὸς Θεὸς καὶ πρὸς ἀνθρωπες διακεἶσθαι. A. Πότε ἐν παρέσται ὁ χρόνος ἕτος, ὦ Σώκρατες; καὶ τίς ὁ παιδέυσων;—S. Οὗτός ἐστιν ω μέλει περὶ σε. ἀλλὰ δοκεῖ μοι, ὥσπερ τῶ Λιομήδει φησὶ τὴν' ΑΘηνᾶν Ὅμηρος ἀπὸ τῶν 'οφθαλμῶν ἀφελεῖν τὴν 'ΑΚΑΥ'ΝΝ,

Ὄρρ' ἕυ γιγνώσκοι ἠμὲν θεὸν ἠδὲ καὶ ἄνδρα,

ἕ τω καὶ σε δεῖν ἀπὸ τῆς ψυχῆς πρῶτον ἀφελοιτα τὴν 'ΑΚΑΥ'ΝΝ, ἣ νὸν παρᾶσα τυγχάνει, τητηνικαῦτ' ἤδη προσφέρειν δἰ ὧν μέλλεις γνώσεσθαι ἐμὲν "κακον ηδὲ καὶ ἐσθλὸν." "νὸν μὲν γὰρ ϐκ εν μοι δοκῆς δυνηθεῖναι. Platonis Alcibiades II. prope Finem.——(Socrates and Alcibiades discourse.) S. It is necessary then to wait till one is informed how one ought to behave, both in religious and social duties, to God and to men.—A. O Socrates, when will that time come, and who shall teach me?—S. EVEN HE WHO CARETH FOR YOU; but it appears to me, as Homer represents Minerva removing a dark cloud from the eyes of Diomed that he might distinguish gods from men in the battle, for he who CARETH FOR YOU must first remove the dark cloud from your mind, which now hangs over it, and then you will use those means by which you may know "the good from ill," which in your present state, you seem to me unable to distinguish.

The philosopher seems to me to have seen the necessity of divine revelation, and to have predicted the evangelical illumination of the Spirit of God.

unreasonable, since it was maintained by men who are acknowledged to have been singularly endowed with the rational faculty.

The omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience of God were strenuously maintained, not only by the wisest of the heathens, but most learned and rational of Christian divines; among whom was Dr. Samuel Clarke, a man by constitution and studies as far removed from enthusiasm, as it is possible to conceive. But the omnipresence of God being allowed as a true doctrine, it will not be difficult to believe his agency on the human mind by supernatural impression. The difficulty would be to believe that the divine Spirit could be PRESENT always and every where with us, and yet never act upon us, but leave the moral world, after the writing of the New Testament, to depend on the fidelity* of translations, the interpretations of fallible men, the preaching and teaching of scholars, deriving all they know of ancient tongues and ancient opinions from dictionaries, and differing continually even on such doctrines as constitute the very corner-stones of the whole Christian fabric.

The doctrine of God's total inaction, in the moral and intellectual world, is irreligious and unphilosophical. The wisest heathens exploded it. Fortunately it is refuted in the strongest language of Scripture. For after our Saviour's ascension, the Holy Spirit was expressly promised, and the ministration of the Spirit, cooperating on the heart of man with the written word, is to continue its energy, as it does at this hour, to the end of time.

* If the fidelity of men may be depended upon, their accuracy cannot; since Dr. Mill, a celebrated editor of the Greek Testament, has collected THIRTY THOUSAND variations in the copies of that little book.

The spirit* of God is every where present, like the air which we inhale. It is no less necessary to intellectual life, than the air to animal. There is a remarkable passage, apposite to the present subject, in the meditations of Antoninus, which I shall give in the translation of Collier, and as it is quoted by Delany.

"Let your soul," says the philosopher, "receive the Deity, as your blood does the air; for the influences of the one are no less vital than the other. This correspondence is very practicable; for there is an ambient omnipresent spirit, which lies as open and pervious to your mind, as the air you breathe does to your lungs. But then you must remember to be disposed to draw it.

"If," continues Dr. Delany, "this gracious gift of Heaven should be denied, because it is not found to dwell with the wicked, I answer, that men may as well deny the existence of the DEW, because it is not often found upon clods and filth, nor even upon grass, trampled with polluted feet.

"Let the grace of God be considered as having some analogy, some resemblance of the DEW OF HEAVEN; the dew of Heaven, which falls alike upon all objects below it, as the grace of God doth upon all mankind, but resteth not upon things defiled. Purity abideth not with pollution."

The argument from analogy has ever been deemed

* Ἁπλοῦν τῇ οὐσίᾳ, ποικιλον ταῖς δυνάμεσιν. ὅλον ἕκαστω παρὸν και ὅλον ἀπανταχοῦ ὄν. ἀπαθῶς μεριζόμενον, και ὁλοσχερῶς μετεχόμενον. —Simple in its essence, various in its powers, present in each individual in its entire state, yet in a state equally entire universally diffused. Divided without suffering separation, and imparted without destroying its integrity. BASIL *de Spiritu Sancto.*

Τό πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἓν και τὸ αὐτὸ πανταχοῦ.—The Holy Spirit is ONE and is every where without losing its identity.

CL. ALEX. PŒD. *lib.* i.

powerful in the support of Christian doctrines. In support of this doctrine, let it have a place.

There is an elemental fire, the electrical fluid, diffused through all nature. Though unseen, its energy is mighty. So also, without doubt, the Divine Spirit actuates the intellectual world, omnipresent, though invisible, all-powerful, though gentle as the vernal breeze.

SECTION XXIX.

The Want of Faith could not be criminal, *if it depended only on the Understanding; but Faith is a* Virtue, *because it originates from virtuous Dispositions favoured by the Holy Spirit.*

FAITH is always required and represented in the gospel as a moral virtue.* This alone establishes the doctrine of this book, that faith, or the evidence

* "All faith may be deemed voluntary, no less than intellectual; and Christian faith is, especially such as requiring thereto more application of soul, managed by choice, than any other.

"Infidelity doth arise from corruption of mind by any kind of brutish lust; any irregular passion, any bad inclination or habit, any such evil disposition of soul as doth obstruct the entertainment of the doctrine which doth prohibit and check it, doth condemn it and brand it with infamy, doth denounce punishment and fire to it, whence men of corrupt minds and reprobate concerning the faith, (2 Tim. iii. 8.), and men of corrupt minds, destitute of the truth, are attributes well conjoined by St. Paul (1 Tim. vi. 5.)

"Infidelity, in its nature, doth involve an affected blindness and ignorance of the noblest and most useful truths; a bad use of reason, a disregard of God's providence, a despite thereto, abuse of his grace, bad opinions of him, and bad affections towards him."

ISAAC BARROW.

"St. Austin says, *non ideo currit rota ut sit rotunda*, &c.—As a wheel runs not that it may be round, but because it is round, so the will believes not that it may be regenerate, but because it is regenerate." PEMBLE.

of the Christian religion, arises from obedience to its laws. There could be no virtue in faith, if it were produced in the mind by demonstrative proofs, such as many apologists for Christianity have endeavoured to display. But there is great virtue in obedience to the moral precepts of the gospel. The heart must be well inclined that endeavours to learn and perform its duty from the dictates of the gospel, notwithstanding the doubts or disbelief which may occasionally arise in the understanding concerning the divine original of so excellent a rule of morality. Such an inclination draws down upon it the favour of God, and consequently the illumination of the Holy Ghost. The doubts and disbelief are gradually removed. A life of piety and good morals is the never-failing result. And thus faith both begins and ends in virtue.

"The reason," says Dr. Clarke, "why faith (which is generally looked upon as an act of understanding, and so not in our power) in the New Testament is always insisted upon as a moral virtue, is, because faith, in the scripture sense, is not barely an act of the understanding, but a mixed act of the will also, consisting very much in that simplicity and unprejudicedness of mind, which our Saviour calls receiving the kingdom of God as a little child, in that freedom from guile and deceit, which was the character of Nathaniel, an Israelite indeed; and in that teachable disposition, and desire to know the will of God, for which the Beræans were so highly commended, *who searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were true.*"

This simple, teachable, unprejudiced state of mind is in itself amiable. It is pleasing both to God and good men. It is esteemed even by the wicked. It is precisely the state in which the Holy Spirit delights,

and with which he will make his abode, bringing with him comfort and illumination. To use the poet's words:

"———— He must delight in virtue;
And that which he delights in must be happy."

If indeed it were a moral virtue merely to believe a narrative on the credibility of the narrators, or the probability of the circumstances, then would it be a moral virtue to believe a well-authenticated newspaper. But to believe the gospel requires purity and piety of heart, those lovely qualities which the imagination conceives characteristic of the angelic nature. It implies a disposition which delights in devotion to God, and beneficence to man; a disposition cheerful, tranquil, and which enjoys every innocent satisfaction of this life, sweetened with the hope, that when the sun sets, it will rise in new and additional splendour. Faith accompanied with hope and charity constitutes the true Christian; a living image of virtue, and forming that beautiful model which the philosopher wished, but despaired to see; truth embodied, virtue personified, walking forth among the sons of men, and exciting, by its conspicuous loveliness, an universal desire of imitation.

SECTION XXX.

Of the scriptural Word " UNCTION*;" its high mysterious Meaning.*

THE very title of our Saviour (משיח and ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ) is the ANOINTED; and the operation of the Holy Ghost is called in the sacred Scriptures (ΧΡΙΣΜΑ) UNCTION. This idea of CHRISMA pervades the whole doctrine of grace.

"The anointing with oil," says Hammond, "de-

noted, among the Jews, the preferring one before another, (and the *Targum* generally renders it by a word which signifies preferring or advancing,) and so became the ceremony of CONSECRATING to any special office, and was used in the installing men to places of any eminence."

The word Chrisma, or unction, was hence assumed to signify the act of the Holy Ghost, in consecrating those who are favoured by divine grace. The consequence of this unction is illumination; for St. John says, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, (the Holy Ghost,) and ye (in consequence) know all things;"* that is, all things that concern the nature and evidence of Christ's religion. Again he says, "The anointing which ye have received of Him (the Holy Ghost) abideth in you; and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth, and is no lie; even as it has taught you, ye shall abide in him."†

The idea of the Chrisma, I repeat, or the unction of the Holy Ghost,‡ pervades the whole doctrine of divine grace. It gives a name to him who brought down the great gift of the Spirit, and who himself had the hallowed unction without measure;§ for what is signified by CHRIST, but the Anointed?‖

I have introduced these observations on the name of CHRIST, partly with a view to expose the false learning of the French philosopher, who has attacked Christianity with singular artifice. The celebrated M. Volney affirms, that Christianity is but the

* 1 John, ii. 20.

† Ibid.

‡ *Dieu fait couler dans l'ame je ne sçais quelle* ONCTION, *qui la remplit.*—God causes to flow into the soul an unction which I cannot describe, but which fills, or satisfies it completely.

BRETONNEAU.

§ John, iii. 34. ‖ κατ' εξοχην.

allegorical worship of the sun—a mere mode of oriental superstition, under the cabalistical names of CHRISEN or CHRIST, the etymology of which, according to him, has no reference to the CHRISMA, unction, but to CHRIS, an astrological name, among the Indians, for the SUN, and signifying *conservator*; "whence," says he, "the Hindoo god, Chriseh or Christna, and the Christian CHRISTOS, the son of Mary." Many of the French philosophers, and perhaps Volney, are unacquainted with Greek.*

But I hope the Christian scholar will never give up the Greek etymology of the word CHRIST, evidently a translation of the Hebrew Messiah; nor the sublime and mysterious doctrine which it leads to, the metaphorical anointing of the Holy Ghost, the sanctifying, consecrating purifying influence of divine grace.†

* The opinion of some of the ancients that Christus was χρηστος, or the *good*, Christiani were χρηστιανοι, though mistaken, was much more honourable to Christianity.

† M. Volney further says, that "YESUS, or Jesus, was an ancient name given to young Bacchus, the clandestine son of the virgin Minerva, who, in the whole history of his life, and even in his death, calls to mind the history of the God of the Christians; that is, the Star of the day, of which they are both of them emblems." Let us avoid the folly of fanciful learning; and say rather that the Star of the day is an emblem of Jesus Christ gloriously enlightening, and vitally warming, by his influence, the intellectual system.

The opinion of the Jews, an oriental people, respecting the Deity ought to be here considered by Christians. "After the second essence," says Eusebius, "comes the Holy Spirit, which the Jews place in this royal dignity and degree of principality, because it is the will of the great Architect to appoint him to the principality of those inferior beings who may want his assistance; who therefore, obtaining the third place, confers on those who are inferior to him, those excellent virtues, which he received from another; the DIVINE LOGOS, his superior, who is second to the supreme, unbegotten, and Almighty God."

Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. vii. cap. 15.

SECTION XXXI.

On what is called by devout Persons experience in Religion.

THERE is a peace of God, which passeth all understanding, and baffles all power of description. The flavour of a pine-apple is delightful to the palate, but words can give no idea of it to him who has never tasted it. There is a fragrance in a rose, which, while the nerves perceive it with complacency, cannot be communicated, in the slightest degree, by language. Such also is the heavenly manna; and he who would form a just notion of its exquisite sweetness, must taste it. No learning, not even the argumentative skill of an Aristotle, can afford him the least idea of it without actual sensation.

"Were I to define Divinity," (says the admirable author of Select Discourses,) "I should rather call it a divine life, than a divine science;* it being something rather to be understood by a spiritual sensation than by any verbal description.

"Divinity is a true efflux from the eternal Light, which, like the sun-beams, does not only enlighten, but heat and enliven. The knowledge of divinity that appears in systems is but a poor wax-light; but the powerful energy of divine knowledge displays itself in purified souls, the true Πεδιον Αληθειας.†

"All the Hebrew divines," says Bishop Clayton, "after that God who is over all, and after this first-born Wisdom (or Logos) pay divine worship to the third and holy Power, which they call RUACH HAKDOKESH, the Holy Spirit by which they themselves are illuminated when they are divinely inspired. They thought the angel GABRIEL was employed in this holy office."

* Bishop Taylor and Mr. Smith coincide here, not only in sentiment, but expression.

† The soil in which TRUTH grows and flourishes, or the basis on which truth stands.

"To seek our divinity merely in books and writings, is to seek the living among the dead. We do but in vain seek God, many times, in these, where his truth too often is not so much enshrined as intombed. No; *intra te quære Deum;* seek for God within thine own soul. He is best discerned,* νοερᾳ επαφῃ, by an intellectual feeling. Εστι δε ψυχης αισθησις τις, the soul itself has a certain feeling.

"The reason why, notwithstanding all our acute reasonings and subtile pursuits, truth prevails no more in the world, is, that we so often disjoin truth and goodness, which of themselves can never be disunited.

"There is a *knowing of the truth as it is in Jesus;* as it is in a Christ-like nature; as it is in that sweet, mild, humble, and loving spirit of Jesus, which spreads itself, like a morning sun, upon the souls of good men, full of light and life. There is an inward beauty, life, and loveliness in divine truth, which cannot be known, but only when it is digested into life and practice.

"Our Saviour, the great master of divine truth, would not, while he was here on earth, draw it up into a system or body, nor would his disciples after him: he would not lay it out to us in any canons or articles of belief, not being so careful to stock and enrich the world with opinions, as with true piety, and a godlike pattern of purity, as the best way to thrive in all spiritual understanding. His main scope was to promote a holy life, as the best and most compendious way to a right belief. He hangs all true acquaintance with divinity upon the doing God's will. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God. This is that alone which will make us, as St. Peter tells us, that

* Plotinus.

we shall not be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour.

"There is an inward sweetness and deliciousness in divine truth, which no sensual mind can taste or relish. The ψυχικὸς ανηρ, the *natural man, savours* not the things of God. Corrupt passions and terrene affections are apt, of their own nature, to disturb all serene thoughts, to precipitate our judgments, and warp our understandings. It was a good maxim of the old Jewish writers, that the Holy Spirit* dwells not in earthly passions. Divinity is not so well perceived by a subtile wit, ωσπερ αισθησει κεκαθαρμενη, as by pure sensation.

"He that will find truth, must seek it with a free judgment and a sanctified mind: he that thus seeks, shall find: he shall live in truth, and truth shall live in him: it shall be like a stream of living waters issuing out of his own soul: he shall drink of the waters of his own cistern, and be satisfied: he shall every morning find this heavenly manna lying upon his soul, and be fed with it to eternal life. He will find satisfaction within, feeling himself in conjunction with truth, though all the world should dispute against him."

Thus the heart of a good man will experience the most pleasurable sensations, when he finds, and find it he will, the pearl of great price, the living energetic gospel, lodged, by divine grace, in the sanctuary of his bosom. He will be filled with all joy in believing; and thus experiencing the efficacy of the Christian religion, he can entertain no doubt of its truth, its divine original.† The real difficulties and

* "רוח הקדש לא שרה בעצב ולא בכעש"

The Ruach Hakkodesh, *or Spirit of Holiness, dwells not with turbulent and angry tempers.*

† "Christianity," says Law, "is its own proof; it can be proved by nothing but itself; it wants neither miracles nor outward witness; but like the sun, is its own *discoverer*."

obscurities of the Scriptures give him little trouble, much less the cavils of sceptics. He has the *witness in himself*,* that the gospel is *the word of God*, the *incorruptible seed* of holiness,† and such felicity as the world never gave, and cannot take away. He cannot adequately describe his state.‡ It is an unspeakable gift. He feels it; and is grateful.

The excellent Norris, after having spent many years in the usual studies of academics, in logic, metaphysics, and other, what he calls, unconcerning curiosities, comes to the following resolution:

"I think," says he, "I shall now chiefly apply myself to the reading of such books as are rather persuasive than instructive; such as are sapid, pathetic, and divinely relishing; such as warm, kindle, and enlarge the interior, and awaken the divine sense (or feeling) of the soul; as considering with myself, that I have now, after so much reading and speculation, more need of heat than of light. Though if I were for more light still, I think this would prove the best method of illumination; and when all is done, the love of God is the best light of the soul. For I consider, with the excellent CARDINAL BONA, that a man may have knowledge without love; but he that loves, although he wants sciences, humanly acquired, yet he will know more than human wisdom can teach him, because he has that master *within him*, who teaches man knowledge."§

If other students and teachers were to follow his example in this instance, there would be much more true devotion and sincere piety in the world; and few would be infidels, except among the desperately

* 1 John, v. 10.

† 1 Pet. i. 23.

‡ THOMAS A KEMPIS thus attempts to describe the happy state, imperfectly indeed, but devoutly: "*Frequens Christi visitatio cum homine interno, dulcis sermocinatio, grata consolatio, multa pax*," &c.—

§ Via *Compend. ad Deum.*

profligate, who harden their hearts, and cloud their understandings by habitual vice and intemperance; who fear Christianity should be true, and therefore, with fool-hardy presumption resolve to deny it.

SECTION XXXII.

On the Seasons of Grace.

THERE are times when the mind seems sensible of a peculiar serenity; the understanding is clear to discern spiritual things, and the heart glows with sentiments of Christian piety and general benevolence. At those times, man appears to be exalted above the common level of mortality. All pure, all peace, all love, all joy, his nature endeavours to soar above the earth, and to reach the source of all excellence. A sweet complacency, in those moments, diffuses itself over the soul, and an internal satisfaction is experienced, which no language can describe; but which renders him who feels it as happy as it is possible to become in a sublunary existence.

These are the halcyon times which may be termed the seasons of grace; the seasons, when the God of mercy, compassionating the weary pilgrim, sends down the cup of comfort to exhilarate and reward him; displays the lamp of heaven, to illuminate his path as he travels in the valley.*

* We sometimes find our understandings clear to discern the subjects of divinity, to look forward into futurity, perceiving things there with the lively colours of present objects, having an unconfused, though incomplete, conception of goodness, of equity, of universal providence, rejoicing in its protection, satisfied with its proceedings, earnest to perform laudable actions, going through our duties with TASTE AND PLEASURE; THESE I TAKE TO BE THE SEASONS OF GRACE."

TUCKER'S (or SEARCH'S) *Light of Nature pursued.*

These favours, as I firmly believe, are offered to all the sons of Adam who do not presumptuously, and repeatedly, and knowingly offend the donor; for that man may grieve the Spirit and quench the Spirit, we are told in the strong language of Scripture.

But a proper reception of this divine benefit will secure its frequency and continuance. Our own endeavours must be exerted with vigilance and constancy, to preserve the divine frame of mind which it may have produced. Nothing can effect this but the avoidance of habitual vice and impurity, and the practice of virtue. But if, after all, there should be seasons of insensibility and coldness, it must not be concluded that the spiritual assistance is withdrawn in displeasure. For even in the darkest valley, an unseen hand can support and guide the pilgrim in his progress; and after the clouds shall have prevailed their time, the sun will break forth with all its warmth and lustre.

It appears to me to be the first object of CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY to secure the duration and frequent recurrence of the seasons of grace. In order to accomplish this end, whatever conduces to the moral improvement of the heart must be pursued with ardour. The fine morality, discovered by the light of nature and the feelings of the heart, probably assisted, among the heathens, by divine interposition, may and ought to be called in to add something to the work of Christian improvement; for the best heathen ETHICS are founded on truth, and therefore immutably valuable. A state of grace without morality, I firmly believe, is not permitted by him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.

But the man who is blessed with the visitations of the divine Spirit, feels his heart, in consequence of it, spontaneously inclined to every thing that is lovely

and of good report. Virtue appears to him amiable, and easy to be practised; and vice disgustful, at once the pollution and the misery of his nature. All the angry passions subside in him; the gentle and benevolent affections grow in their place, and man becomes what he was before the lapse of Adam, and what the gospel revelation was designed to render him, a being little lower than the angels.

SECTION XXXIII.

Of mistaking the Effects of Imagination for the Seasons of Grace.

THERE are many who will scarcely allow the existence of any thing which they cannot subject to the notice of the senses. They must literally see the truth of every thing which requires their assent, or they will doubt its reality. To them, whatever is said on the subject of a spiritual world, or an invisible agency on the soul of man, appears to be the effusion of fancy, and the sick man's dream.

And indeed the experience of mankind justifies great caution in distinguishing between the actual operation of the Holy Spirit, and the delirious effects of a too lively imagination. The imagination, heated by the devotional flame, has often kindled a destructive fire. It is indeed the parent of fanaticism, in all its extremities, and all its evil consequences. As, therefore, the real agency of the Holy Spirit is to be invited and cherished, so the mere imagination of it is to be most studiously avoided.

That the whole doctrine is not imaginary, is evident to him who reads and believes the gospel. Such operations are there plainly spoken of and promised as the

greatest blessings to the human race. Their effects are described as great and sudden, in affording both comfort, holiness, and illumination.

The reality of seasons of grace cannot be questioned but by him who at the same time questions the whole system of revelation. And a rational man, it is to be believed, will find no difficulty in satisfying himself that he is not deluded by his imagination, when he feels himself particularly virtuous, pure, benevolent, and open to celestial influence.

But as all men are not governed by reason, and none are governed by it uniformly, it certainly is probable that the delusions of imagination may often be mistaken for supernatural assistance. A few cautionary suggestions on the subject may not, therefore, be superfluous.

Since it is possible that the best-intentioned may be thus deluded, let every man try his spirit by the fruits it produces; not by a sudden or momentary fruit, but by the frequency, abundance, and permanency of its productions. If it habitually produces peace, joy, purity, piety, and benevolence, let no man attribute it to his imagination; but give the glory to God, and be grateful.

But if it display itself in pride, self-conceit, and contempt of others, in acts of violence, in disturbing good order, in any behaviour which seems to argue an opinion of peculiar inspiration from Heaven, of a partial commission given to an individual to reform the world by irregular, uncharitable, and offensive interposition; if it pretends to visions and illuminations unexperienced by the best and wisest of men; if it assumes the privilege of actually conversing IN PERSON with Jesus Christ, and talks of the hour and moment when the Holy Ghost rushed upon the bosom; it is time to beware of the infatu-

ation of a deluded fancy. There is certainly every reason to believe that such a temper of mind is not from God.

But it is folly and impiety to confound with these that sweet frame and disposition of mind, which the Scriptures describe as descending from the Holy Ghost, and which has indeed every mark of divine origin.

He who condemns the doctrine of divine agency on the mind of man as fanciful, must, if he is consistent, include the whole of the Christian religion, and all that has ever been said or written in favour of it, under the same imputation. According to him, the fair edifice must melt away, like a palace of ice, when the sun of reason shines upon it. But we maintain that the true gospel, which is indeed the doctrine of grace, is the ROCK of ages.*

* *Alii disputent, ego mirabor et venerabor.*—Let others dispute; I will wonder and worship. Dr. HORBERRY says, "The Pelagians of old denied the doctrine of divine grace, and this seems to be too much the temper of some writers in our own times. The doctrine is this: that the Holy Ghost, by a secret operation on men's minds, disposes them to the love, and assists them in the practice of virtue. This influence is commonly called Grace. The necessity of this influence, or as our church scruples not to call it, this inspiration of the Holy Spirit, (Communion Service,) arises from the weakness and corruption of our nature. This is a brief account of the doctrine, which has usually been taught in the Christian church; but which some writers of great note (as was before intimated) have treated with a great degree of reservedness.

See Sermons by Matthew Horberry, D. D. and particularly that on John, iii. 8.

SECTION XXXIV.

Of Seasons of Desertion, or supposed Absence of the Spirit.

THERE are seasons in the lives of good men, when their sense of spiritual things is comparatively dull; and many, at these times, have been alarmed with an idea of being totally deserted by the Spirit, and have fallen into a state of despondency. But if there were no other proof that the grace of God is still vouchsafed to them, their uneasiness alone would evince it.—While pain is felt, the surgeon apprehends not a mortification.

But the alarm, it may be presumed, is, to the pious Christian, unnecessary. For it is certain that the visitations of the Holy Spirit are sometimes more sensible than at others; and that when they are not sensible at all, its guidance and benign protection may continue unaltered. The light sometimes shines with a bright and strong effulgence, to guide us into the right way; but while we are proceeding in it safely and regularly, and without an inclination to deviate, or immediate danger of falling, the rays may be emitted less powerfully, because less necessary. The moment there appears danger of wandering or of stumbling, the lamp is ready to shine with instantaneous radiance. Thus an infant, just beginning to walk, is guided by the parent's hand, watched with the parent's eye, and encouraged by the parent's voice, and yet it is often permitted to go alone, without assistance or encouragement, in order to exercise its strength, and to give it a due degree of confidence. But the tender mother may

still hold the leading-string unobserved by the infant, and, at the very first lapse, save the fall. The sun, though obscured by clouds, affords light and warmth, guides mankind in all their operations, and supports both animal and vegetative life.

The mistaken opinion that ecstasy and rapture are always necessary to evince the presence of the Holy Spirit, has brought the doctrine into discredit among the sober and rational, and introduced much misery among the ignorant, the weak, and the fanciful. The sober and rational neither experienced such ardour without intermission, nor did they believe the nature of man, as he is now constituted, capable of supporting it. The ignorant, the weak, and the fanciful, endeavouring to raise themselves to a height which they could either not reach or not maintain, fell from disappointment to dejection, and from dejection to despair.

In truth, the influence of the Spirit rushes not like a continual torrent, but flows as a gentle river, which, indeed, for the most part, displays its silver surface in the meadows, but may sometimes conceal itself, without being lost, in a subterranean channel.

While we retain faith, hope, and charity, and while we seek the favour of God in fervent prayer, we have every reason to believe that grace abounds in us, though we should not, for a considerable time, be favoured with the livelier experience of its immediate energy. If we persevere in a virtuous course, we may rest assured that God will, at all proper intervals, and for our reward and encouragement, show us the light of his countenance.

Let the pious Christian remember, that HOPE is placed, in the celebrated enumeration of Christian virtues, next to faith, and before charity. Let him, therefore, take care not to indulge the least tendency

to such melancholy ideas of desertion as may lead to despair. God will not behold a sincerely contrite heart, anxious to find grace, without affording it; and though, for wise purposes of trial, it is possible that he may not, for a short time, bestow it in its more sensible influences, yet there is every reason to believe, that he who sincerely grieves because he thinks himself less favoured by the Holy Spirit than usual, is, on that very account, (I mean, because he grieves,) in a state of grace, and therefore safe.

SECTION XXXV.

Of the Doctrine that the Operations of the Holy Spirit are NEVER *distinguishable from the Operations of our own Minds.*

INGENIOUS and philosophical divines, desirous of discouraging, to the utmost of their power, all fanciful pretensions to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, have boldly affirmed that its influence is not to be distinguished from the ordinary operations of the human mind. Their endeavour to prevent the evils of a wild imagination deserves praise; but they should be cautious of misrepresenting the effects of divine agency, and denying truth, with a design of obviating error.

From the plain and repeated accounts of Scripture, it appears that this divine agency produces a very great alteration in the mind; a much greater than could be produced by its own natural operations. It is God that worketh in you, saith St. Paul, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

I speak with the utmost diffidence, when I say it appears probable that energy so powerful is some-

* Phil. ii. 13.

times distinguishable from the spontaneous operations of the mind. I am sensible that the doctrine may open a door to fanatical extravagance; but if it is the true doctrine, it ought to be maintained, whatever may be the consequences.

The influence of the Holy Ghost is represented in Scripture as consolatory. When a good man, in deep affliction, feels, in consequence of his prayer and devotion, a spring of comfort flowing upon his mind, such as no reasoning of his own, no external circumstances, no condolence of his friends could produce, is there not reason to believe that the influence of God's Holy Spirit is upon him, and that it is distinguishable from his own thoughts and imagination? The operations of his own mind lead only to horror and dismay; but a light rises up in the darkness; and is it not easy to perceive that this unexpected radiance is the day-spring from on high?

When the pious Christian, employed in fervent prayer, finds himself full of holy joy and humble confidence, and feels his heart melt within him, overflowing with love of God and charity to man, is there not more presumption in attributing this state to the mere operations of his own mind, than to the God of spirits, actually dispensing to believers that grace or favour which he has promised in the gospel?

When temptations to sin assault with violence, and a man feels himself strengthened, so as to be able to overcome, at the very moment of his intended surrender, shall he erect the victorious trophies to his own virtue? His own reason and resolution had betrayed him, the operations of his own unassisted mind tended to concession; but God gave him strength from his holy place, and to God only is due the praise.

Innumerable are the circumstances and situations

in life, in which comfort, illumination, protection, and strength are afforded in a degree and manner, which it is much more unreasonable to think could be produced by the mere operations of the mind, than that they were supplied by the author and giver of all good.

In making the distinction between the operations of the Holy Spirit and those of the human mind, the wisest men will ever be obnoxious to mistake. The weak, wicked, and hypocritical, may deceive themselves or others in it, to the injury or offence of many. But still the inconveniences of this perversion cannot entirely justify divines in their confidential and repeated assersions, that since the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, such as were bestowed on the Apostles, have ceased, the operations of the Holy Ghost on the mind are in no instance or degree to be distinguished from the mind's own operations. These assertions approach nearly to an entire denial of the doctrine: a very dangerous and impious blasphemy.*

* "*Nam si tota Dei actio consistit in clarâ evangelii propositione, opportunè factâ, cur* omnipotentia *ad id requiritur? Quorsum adhibentur a* PAULO *magnificæ illæ voces, ad describendam, quam exerit Deus in nobis, omnipotentiam,* Eph. i. 18, 19. *quum dicit esse υπερβαλλον μεγεθος δυναμεως et κατα την ενεργειαν του κρατους της ισχυος.*"—For if the whole of the interposition of God consists in the clear proposal of the Gospel, opportunely made, why is omnipotence required for it? Why are those magnificent expressions applied by St. Paul to describe the *omnipotence* which God exerts in us? "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the *exceeding greatness of his power* to us ward, who believe according to the *working of his mighty power.*"***To assert that the POWER of God working in us, differs not perceptibly from the ordinary powers of man. "*Annon hoc est actionem omnipotentem Dei* obscurare *et in nihilum ferme redigere?*"—Is not this to extenuate the almighty energy of God, and almost to reduce it to nothing? TURRETIN.

SECTION XXXVI.

Of devotional Feelings or SENTIMENTS.

THE pious devotee has exposed himself to the derison of the scorner, by talking of spiritual feelings which he could not accurately describe; and the reality of which can never be proved by external testimony.

But I know not why the word feeling, which, in this age, is applied to all occasions, should not be applied to religion.* The lover, the artist, the

It may here be asked, what man can judge infallibly of that which passes in the mind of another? Yet many RATIONAL divines dogmatically declare to their disciples, that it is impossible, in any circumstances, to distinguish the energy of God's grace on their hearts, from the common and natural workings of the passions and imagination. This is to assume a power of discernment which belongs to him only, to "*whom all hearts are open, and from whom no secrets are hidden.*"

To what strange absurdities may even good men and great divines be carried, when they are extolling human reason, in order, as they pretend, and I believe, think, to discourage fanaticism! Thus the great Tillotson says:

YOU DO NOT FIND IT ANY WHERE REVEALED IN ALL THE SCRIPTURES THAT THERE IS A GOD.

TILLOTSON'S *Sermons*, quoted by Dr. EDWARDS.

Again. "We have not (from the Scriptures) infallible assurance that there is a God." *See the Quotation in* Dr. EDWARDS'S *Preacher*, vol. i. p. 150.

This example should make the rational divines of the present day a little cautious in deriding or despising other men's conviction, whencesoever it may arise.

* Why should religion be the only subject on which we are not allowed to FEEL? Men are praised for the exercise of ardour, and even of ecstasy in poetry, in politics, and in the endearing connections of social life; but in religion, we must either go on with cool indifference, or be branded as enthusiasts. Is it because religion is of less importance than other things? Is eternal salvation of less consequence than the political or domestic accommodations of time;

connoisseur, enlarge upon the acuteness of their feelings in the contemplation of the excellence they admire. The man of delicacy is for ever boasting of his fine feelings, and the beautiful embarrassment which they create. The spectator in a theatre, the hearer at a concert, expatiates on the effect which the spectacle and the music have produced on his feelings; and shall not he who contemplates the universe, and adores the maker of it, and of those powers by which he both adores and contemplates, shall not he be allowed to feel; and when his bosom glows with love, gratitude, and devotion, shall his pretensions to feelings be stigmatized as the delirious language of a wild enthusiasm?*

The frigid temper of scholastic theology would deny the reality of every thing which, from its own defect of sensibility, it never yet experienced.

That the Divine Spirit, operating on the mind, should cause in it a serenity, a tranquillity, a comfort, which no words can express, is highly credible;

It is treated by multitudes as if it were; and the spirit of Socinianism, so far as it operates, tends to keep them in countenance. Is it not a pity but those who call themselves rational Christians, would act more rationally? Nothing can be more irrational, as well as injurious, than to encourage an ardour of mind after the trifles of a moment, and to discourage it when pursuing objects of infinite magnitude.

"Passion is reason, transport temper here." FULLER.

* That elegant mathematician, deep philosopher, and excellent man, DANIEL BERNOUILLI, said, that, when reading the wonderful discoveries of Sir Isaac Newton, "his mind has sometimes been so overpowered by thrilling emotions, that he has wished that moment to be the last, and that it was this which gave him the clearest conception of the happiness of heaven."

And cannot the contemplation of the Cause of causes be allowed to excite warm feelings in the bosom, when the happy conjectures of human sagacity are able to excite in the cold bosom of a mathematician, thrilling emotions?

when a thousand inferior agents, or causes, are able to produce emotions of various kinds; gentle or violent, painful or pleasing. But well-meaning divines endeavouring to explode those extravagant pretensions to feeling, which have deluded the vulgar, disturbed society, and driven many to madness, have denied the possibility of such sentiments, and attributed them entirely to the force of fancy, to folly, and to hypocrisy. They deserved praise for their endeavour to prevent evil; but by exceeding the bounds of truth in their censure, they prevented good at the same time. For their doctrines unintentionally taught men to neglect the benign seasons of grace, and to confound the holy assistance of heaven with the mere operations of the human mind. They allow that the Scripture plainly speaks of heavenly influence; but they boldly assert, that it can never be distinguished from the ordinary actings of natural sentiment, intellect, passion, and imagination.

The word feelings, in religion, has been treated with such contempt and ridicule, that the truth respecting them, is in danger of suffering, without a fair examination. Such is the force of words and prepossession. But let the word be changed to the synonymous term, sentiment, and then let any one object, with solid argument, to giving the name of religious sentiment to that pious, virtuous, pure state of mind, which is caused by the influence of the Holy Ghost, in the happy hour when God, in his mercy, showers it down, more abundantly than usual, on the human bosom.

But, on this topic, great caution is required; for men, especially the ignorant and passionate, are prone to attribute their own dreams and emotions to demoniacal or celestial impressions. Such a persua-

sion leads to spiritual pride,* to a perseverance in error and vice, to cruelty, and to persecution. He who is acquainted with ecclesiastical history, will recollect many dreadful examples of false feelings, and pretended inspiration. The deluded and deluding persons have represented themselves as prophets, new Messiahs, and even as God; and what is more extraordinary, they have persuaded many to believe them, and have conducted a willing multitude to whatever mischief their zealous hearts erroneously conceived.

While, therefore, a conviction that there is indeed a religious sentiment, or a divine and holy feeling, which impresses the heart more forcibly than any argument, induces me to maintain so important a truth; I must, in the most anxious and importunate terms, express my desire that none may teach, and none submit to be taught, a belief, at this period, in extraordinary inspiration or grace given to any one man exclusively.

All spiritual pride, all cruelty, all persecution, are, in their nature, repugnant to the Spirit of grace: and though they probably proceed from strong feelings, they are feelings arising from passion, fancy, and actual insanity. Whoever is under their influence, must have recourse to the SPIRIT OF GRACE, that his feelings or sentiments may become all gentle, benevolent, peaceable, and humble. If his extravagancies still continue to carry him to injurious actions and disorderly behaviour, application must be made to the physician, or, in cases of extremity, to the civil magistrate.

* False religion is always ostentatious. Its object is to be noticed, admired, revered. When men talk of their feelings, there is reason to suspect vanity, hypocrisy, or knavery. It is justly said, non est religio, ubi omnia patent.

There can be nothing in the genuine sentiment, or feelings occasioned by the Spirit of God, which is not friendly to man, improving to his nature, and cooperating with all that sound philosophy and benignant laws have ever done to advance the happiness of the human race, and strengthen the bands of society.*

SECTION XXXVII.

Of Enthusiasm.

ENTHUSIASM is commonly used and understood in a bad sense; but if its real meaning† be attended to, it may certainly admit of a very fine one. It means a consciousness or persuasion that the Deity is actually present, by an immediate emanation or impulse on the mind of the enthusiast; the reality of which, in

* Dr. John Tottie, canon of Christchurch, a most elegant scholar and sound divine, addresses the students of the university of Oxford, on the subject of the Spirit's influence, thus: in a sermon on "*The wind bloweth where it listeth*," &c.

"The same kind of operation hath the Spirit of God. The inspiration of it flows like the soft and warm breezes of the air. It refreshes the soul with peaceful and pleasing thoughts; it keeps the conscience pure and undefiled, and preserves it from the pestilential contagion of sin. All this may be perceived and felt.

"We shall feel and confess the enlivening presence of this Holy Spirit, in the peace of conscience, in an unruffled composure and serenity of mind, in having a delight in virtue, in the possession of all those Christian graces that purify and refine the soul, in the assurance of God's favour, and in hopes full of immortality. These effects the pious and good Christian, who is led by the Spirit, does most undoubtedly feel."

To this sermon before the university of Oxford, June, 1st, 1766, the same excellent divine adds:

"No man can be a real Christian who has not an intimate union with the divine Spirit."

† ΕΝ ΘΕΟΣ.

certain cases, is the doctrine of the church and of the gospel; a doctrine sufficiently consonant to reason, and not necessarily connected with self-delusion, folly, madness, or fanaticism.*

But because many have made pretensions to the privilege of God's immediate presence in their hearts, whose lives and conduct gave reason to suspect that they were not thus favoured, the word enthusiasm, which, in common language, expressed their false pretensions, has fallen into disgrace, and now often implies no more than the idea of a bigot or a devotee, weakly deluded by the fond visions of a disordered imagination.

But let not enthusiasm of the better kind, a modest confidence of being assisted, as the gospel promises, by the agency of the Holy Spirit, be involved in undeserved disgrace. We are taught that the Divinity resides in the pure heart. The belief of it is indeed enthusiasm, but it is enthusiasm of the noble, the virtuous, the necessary kind. The ardour which it inspires is laudable. Like that of all other good things, the corruption and abuse of it is productive of great evil; but still it is not itself to be exploded.

There is, indeed, a cold philosophy, which seems to discourage all the warm sentiments of affection, and will hardly allow them in any thing which concerns religion. It aims at reducing theology to a scholastic science, and would willingly descant on the love of God, and the sublimest discoveries of the gospel, in the same frigidity of temper as it would

* Religious enthusiasm is not blamable, when it is a strong persuasion, a firm belief, of a continual operation, impression and influence from above; when it is a total resignation to, and dependence upon, the immediate inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit in the whole course of our lives; this is as sober and rational a belief, as to believe that we always "*live, and move, and have our being in God.*" LAW.

explain the metaphysics of Aristotle. But there is natural and laudable ardour in the mind of man, whenever it contemplates magnificent objects; and which is certainly to be expected, when that object is the Lord God omnipotent, and the human soul, a particle of Deity, aspiring to reunion with the Supreme Being, and meditating on immortality.

Is there not an ardour of enthusiasm, which admires and produces excellence in the arts of music, painting, and poetry?* And shall it be allowed in the humble province of imitative skill, and exploded in contemplating the great archetype of all; the source of life, beauty, order, grandeur, and sublimity? Shall I hear a symphony, or behold a picture, a statue, or a fine prospect, with rapture, and at the same time consider God, who made both the object and the sense that perceives it, with the frigid indifference of scholastic philosophy? Shall I meditate on heaven, hell, death, and judgment, with all the coolness with which a lawyer draws a formal instrument, an arithmetician computes a sum, or a logician forms a syllogism in mood and figure?

Such coolness, on such subjects, arises not from superiority of wisdom, but from pride and affectation, from acquired callosity or natural insensibility

* You need not go to a cloister, the cell of a monk, or to a field preacher to see enthusiasts; they are every where, at balls, at masquerades, at court, and at the exchange; they sit in all coffee-houses, and cant in all assemblies."

What greater enthusiasts than infidels, who write voluminous works merely to display their abilities in destroying systems which at the same time they acknowledge to be beneficial.

Two thirds of the New Testament must appear to the mathematical divines, rank enthusiasm. Some of them, just from the schools of Cambridge, seem inclined to study theology with a pair of compasses, a rule, and a line. What must they say when they come to such passages as this, "*that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God?*" Is not the being filled with God enthusiasm? Eph. iii. 19.

of temper. God has bestowed on man a liveliness of fancy, and a warmth of affection, as well as an accuracy and acuteness of reason and intellect; he has bestowed a HEART vibrating with the tender chords of love and pity, as well as a *brain* furnished with fibres adapted to subtile disquisition.

The Scriptures afford many examples of a laudable and natural enthusiasm. *My heart was hot within me,* says David; and the warm poetry of the psalms, the rapturous style of prophecy, are proofs that those who have been singularly favoured by God were of tempers which the modern philosophers would call enthusiastical. Their fire was kindled at the altar. St. John was a burning and a shining light. St. Paul was avowedly of an ardent temper, and a glowing imagination; nor did our Saviour himself express his sentiments in the cold language of the Aristotelian school, but with emphasis and pathos.

They who rail at enthusiasm, in general terms, and without making a due distinction between the scriptural and the false kind, consist either of those who laudably endeavour to discredit the pretensions of the hypocrite, and the weak brother; or of those who, from their speculative habits, their cold tempers, or irreligious lives, labour to discountenance all pretensions to an excellence and purity, which they never felt, and to which they could not rise.

Whoever believes what the Scriptures indisputably affirm, that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and that he actually resides in it, when it is purified sufficiently for his reception, is so far an enthusiast: but let him glory in the appellation; for he is such an one as every Christian, who thinks and feels in conformity to the gospel he professes, must be of necessity. If he denies the agency of the Spirit of God on the soul of man, he denies the most

important doctrine of revelation, and must be a stranger to its finest effects on the human bosom.

But since such is the case, let those who very laudably write against enthusiasm of the false kind, take care not to confound truth with falsehood; and not to proceed to such an extreme in refuting the pretensions of hypocrites, fools, or knaves, as to infringe on the genuine and sublime doctrine of grace, the glory of the everlasting gospel.

SECTION XXXVIII.

Cautions concerning Enthusiam.

So many and so melancholy are the effects of mistaken and excessive enthusiasm recorded in the annals of mankind, that wise men are justly alarmed at every appearance of it, and little inclined to give it indulgence.

Whatever there has been of savage cruelty, whatever of public violence and tumult, and confusion, the utmost extremes of all these evils, in all their consequences, have been equalled by the frantic extravagance of false enthusiasm. It has exhibited, in some tempers, all the symptoms of a malignant disease, and terminated, at last, in real and most deplorable insanity.

If then it be wisdom to obviate the approaches of distemper, those men have evinced themselves wise, who have laboured to discourage, by all the arts of ridicule and argument, the earliest tendencies among the people to religious phrensy. There are innocent follies, and there is a madness, which is only the object of compassion; but the folly and madness of the bigot are detestable, because they are destructive as a pestilence. Against such an enemy to human

happiness, philosophy has urged her best reason, justice has unsheathed her sword, and the stage, to complete the triumph, has played all the batteries of derision.

But argumentation, coercive force, and even ridicule, have been found ineffectual. All these are classed, by the bigot, under the term persecution; and persecution, like a current of air, adds violence to fire. The gentler, the kinder, the more Christian mode of expostulation and rational concession, wherever concession can be made, may, like a balsamic vulnerary, heal the sore which opposition would cause to rankle.

I therefore do not deny the justice of the enthusiast's pretensions, who professes himself actuated by a belief that the Holy Spirit condescends to assist him in virtuous endeavours, by a sacred influence from Heaven. But I caution him against entertaining, for a moment, the presumptuous idea, that the same Spirit which assists him, does not, with equal readiness and efficacy, assist his pious neighbour also, and all sincere believers, throughout Christendom, however distinguished by sect, church, or persuasion.*

I urge him to try his spirit by the infallible touchstone of Scripture. Is it pure, is it peaceable, is it gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy?† If it should be deficient in any of these amiable qualities, let him be cautious of indulging it, lest the spirit should be of a diabolical, and not of a heavenly nature.

And in what manner is he to form a judgment of himself, since the heart is deceitful, and to know

* The fault of the Methodists seems to be, that they arrogate to themselves EXCLUSIVE privileges of grace.

† James, iii. 17.

oneself is the most difficult of sciences? If his high pretensions are accompanied with a bad life; if he be disposed to contend with rancour and violence in support of his pretensions; if he be disposed to involve all who think differently from him in perdition; if he decry good works; and if, with every appearance of sanctity, and many external acts of piety and benevolence, he reserves to himself some secret and favourite vice, he may rest assured, that the spirit which actuates him is not from above.

If he be inclined to neglect, despise, and revile decent and useful ordinances, such as are countenanced by Scripture, and have a direct tendency to preserve peace, benevolence, and piety; if he prefer himself to all regular and learned ministers, whether in the establishment or out of it, and preach to ignorant and deluded multitudes in the fields with the air and voice of phrensy, he may have just reason to fear, though he should have ten thousand in his train, that he has carried his pretensions to the Spirit beyond that wisdom, moderation, and love of order, which the Author of our religion taught, both by precept and example.

If, in his writings, he apply the scriptural language to himself, and assume the authority of a primitive apostle; if, at the same time, he express his ideas in such a manner as to excite the laughter and contempt of men of sense and approved goodness, he may infer that his spiritual pride has hurried him to the verge of insanity; and, as he values his health and happiness, should exert himself to remove the febrile symptoms, which are at once contagious and fatal.

When mechanics, of confined education, and not remarkable for natural discernment, or peculiar virtue and goodness, think themselves better able to

instruct the people,* than a numerous class of their fellow-citizens, who have been separated, from their youth, for sacred offices, instructed in learning of various kinds, versed in the original languages of Scripture; the very idea implies so great a degree of pride and self-conceit, that it cannot come from the gentle, unassuming spirit of Him who was himself meek and lowly, and who everywhere taught his disciples the lesson of humility.

If such persons urge, in defence of their extravagant behaviour, their dereliction of their trades and daily labours, and their assumption of the priest's office, a particular CALL, from Heaven itself, louder than reaches the ears of others; let them, before they believe themselves, or persuade others, produce, as a credential of their commission, a miracle. If they find themselves utterly unable to do this, let them return to the workshop and warehouse, renounce the deceitful spirit, and evince their attainment of the true, by humility, charity, modesty, and obedience to lawful superiors; by a study to be quiet, and an attention to their own business.

From such practices, and such persons as I have alluded to, has arisen much of the disgrace which has fallen on true and laudable enthusiasm, or that wisdom which is infused into the pure, gentle, and charitable heart from above. False enthusiasm should be discouraged, that true religion may grow and flourish; as the weed should be plucked up, to give

* I will never join in what has been called St. Austin's Litany. *A logicâ libera nos, Domine.*—From sound reasoning, good Lord, deliver us.

One may reprobate the proud pretensions of the boasting rationalist, who would subject revelation to his own reason, without at the same time encouraging or approving the nonsense of a ranter.

room for the wholesome plant to strike root, expand itself in foliage and blossoms, and produce good fruit in abundance.

SECTION XXXIX.

OF BEING RIGHTEOUS OVERMUCH.

It seems to be very doubtful, whether the scriptural phrase of being *righteous overmuch*, signifies that sort of excess which methodists and fanatics are apt to indulge. I am rather induced to believe, that it means an extreme rigour in exacting from others an unerring rectitude. "Be not righteous overmuch; why shouldst thou destroy thyself?"* That is, "Establish not, by thy severity, a rule so strict as must, if put in force against thyself, involve thee, imperfect as thou art, in destruction." The prohibition seems to me to quadrate with the old observation, that justice in the extreme is extreme injustice.†

There are other interpretations of the words at least as probable as that which confines it to the over-sanctity of the methodist or bigot.

The ingenious and pious Dr. Trapp has taken the words in the latter sense, and written, with great force of argument, against the extravagances of methodism. Perhaps the words of his text did not properly authorize him in deriving the doctrine from them which he has laid down; but, whether they did or not, he doubtless had reason on his side, when he endeavoured to explode all superstitious excesses which are subversive of true religion, injurious to

* Eccles. vii. 16. † Summum jus, summa injuria.

society, and painful, without advantage, to the deluded individual.*

Philosophers, by the light of nature, discovered in the earliest ages, the wisdom of avoiding extremes; and no precepts are more common than those which recommend the golden mediocrity. These were undoubtedly suggested by actual experience, and a careful study of the human constitution. If they are just and proper, when applied to philosophy, there is every reason to think them equally so when applied to religion, which is the perfection of philosophy. Excess, in the very name, implies culpability, even when the things, in which it appears, are of a virtuous and laudable nature.

So that whoever advances his virtues beyond the line of rectitude, errs no less than he who stops, at an equal interval, on this side of it. Yet, at the same time, I must observe, that there is something far more noble and generous in errors of excess than of defect; and the virulence which has been shown in reviling the poor methodist, who has been tormenting himself† with superfluous austerities, seems to

* "But let it be remembered, that no virtue has any blameable extreme in it, till it contradicts the general end of religion, till it hinders the restoration of the divine Image in us, or makes us less fit to appear among the inhabitants of heaven. Abstinence, temperance, mortification of the senses and passions, can have no excess till they hinder the purification of the soul, and make the body less useful and subservient to it. Charity can have no excess till it contradicts that love which we are to have in heaven, till it goes beyond the command of loving our neighbour as we love ourselves, and till it forgets that our own life is to be preserved." *Answer to Dr. Trapp's Discourse.*

† The poor Heautontimorumenos, with his pale emaciated figure, is certainly not an object of ridicule, and ought, at least, to be forgiven, by the plump pluralist and dignitary gorging the tithe pig, and washing it down with the choicest wines of Portugal and France.

me to arise from a want of good-nature and charity, far more criminal than the mistaken discipline of a zealous devotee.

Those among the methodists who are sincere in their rigid self-denial, and in all the active and passive virtues of their persuasion, are certainly objects of kindness and compassion, rather than of severe animadversion.

The church, and the protestant dissenters, it appears, teach the doctrine of grace; a doctrine which, I believe, the methodists consider as of the first moment; and for the sake of attending to which with more earnestness, they seceded from the church and meeting-house to the tabernacle. Their preachers, they found, were used to dwell upon that subject, more than on any others; and with a degree of vehemence not usual or approved by men of more learning, moderation, and humility. They were caught by the sound, and taught to hate both the church and all regular ministers with a hatred truly unchristian. The church and the ministers,* it seems, were not sufficiently holy for their purpose. The church and the ministers did not preach the gospel in its purity; and neither its doctrine nor its discipline were, in their opinions, sufficiently strict and severe.

The dissemination of such ideas may answer the ends of self-appointed leaders, who wish to increase their importance, by drawing a multitude after them. Accusation will generally be heard with attention. Pretensions to superior holiness is one of the most successful means of deceit. The multitude are attracted by these, and a thousand other arts, co-

* When these become the mere tools of statesmen, all religious people are offended, and one of the pillars of the state is shaken.

operating with the natural tendency which they feel to superstition and fanaticism. They thus become self-tormentors; lose most of the comforts, and neglect many of the duties of life.

In the church of England, their favourite doctrine of grace ought to be preached in the manner which both reason, Scripture, and experience best approve; for the doctrine of grace is most fully declared to be the doctrine of the church of England; and if the ministers are reluctant to preach it in all its force, it is from a fear of falling into the sin and disgrace of *overmuch righteousness*. It is the humble endeavour of my treatise on this subject, to stimulate preachers to enlarge on the doctrine of grace; and by those means to bring back the numerous sheep who have strayed from their flock. There is the sort of food in which the sheep will show that they delight, if the shepherds will but bring it forth; and indeed there is little doubt but that most of them do, on some occasions: but if the sheep hunger and thirst after more than they usually receive, the good shepherd will not in future fail to open all the stores with which the Scriptures abundantly supply him.

With respect to doctrine, the over-righteous Christian, as he is now called, will thus have no cause to complain of defect in the church; and with respect to moral discipline, it is very certain that self-denial, mortification, fasting, active beneficence, and all Christian perfection, are, for the most part, taught by the church and her ministers, with great force of argument and authority. Every Christian may carry the moral discipline of his religion to whatever lengths his conscience or inclination may urge him.

It must be confessed, that such is the moderation of the church and her pastors in the present age,

that the duties which they teach are not urged with that unnatural rigour which precludes the rational enjoyment of life. It is a cheerful church, and for that reason the more estimable. It requires no excessive austerity. It aims at assisting poor erring mortals in overcoming their weakness and misery; but it does not add to them, by requiring the sacrifice of health, ease, peace, society, cheerfulness, and innocent gaiety. It does not condemn those, with whom it cannot agree in opinion, with uncharitable severity. It is gentle and candid; it is accommodated to such a creature as man, for ever aiming at good, but, from weakness, continually relapsing into some degree of evil. It does not, like the severe system of the over-righteous, inflame and aggravate the wounds of its patients, but, with lenient balsamics, assuages their anguish.*

And if the over-righteous object that regularly-bred ministers want vehemence and earnestness, I affirm that the objection cannot be universally well-founded. Men, having various degrees of talents, and various degrees of sensibility, will have a correspondent variety in their modes of delivery. The lively by nature, with very little sense of religion, may be animated in their discourses; the dull by nature, with a meaning very honest and pious, will be poor orators. And it always happens, in a very large body of men, that some are idle and irreligious; though circumstances may have led them to assume a profession where carelessness and impiety are doubly culpable. But such is the present state of human nature. He who demands more per-

* By the church I wish to be understood all those who are united to Christ by the Holy Ghost, wherever they dwell, and by whatever denomination they are distinguished. The world, in the scriptural sense, consists of all who are not so united.

fection than experience has ever yet found, is unreasonable and over-righteous. If some men have less pretension, and less vehemence, than those who are called the over-righteous, they have probably less hypocrisy, less folly, and less spiritual arrogance. Over-righteousness, with all its pretensions to humility, is often the parent as well as the child of pride.

After all, let us remember, that there is an *under-righteousness*, (if I may use the term) as well as an over-righteousness; and that mankind are much apter to err from defect than excess. While hypocrisy and fanaticism are avoided, let us not, in the present times, be alarmed at danger from excessive piety.

SECTION XI.

All extravagant and selfish Pretensions to the Spirit to be anxiously avoided, as they proceed from and cherish Pride, and are frequently accompanied with Immorality.

OSTENTATIOUSLY to pretend to greater portions of the Spirit than others, is alone a very unfavourable symptom, as it is a presumptive proof of two wants, not compatible with the Spirit's benignant influence: the want of humility, and the want of charity. It is no wonder, therefore, that those who have made such pretensions, have disgraced them by the wickedness of their lives; and have induced ill-judging men hastily to consider the whole doctrine of divine assistance as a mere delusion.*

* The phrases, being *Godded with God, Christed with Christ,* and others equally absurd, adopted by fanatics of the last century, have given just offence to men of sense and sincerity; but disgust is apt to run into extremes, and like the loathing occasioned by sickness, to cause a rejection of wholesome aliment.

Hypocrites, in fanatical times, when the appearance of extraordinary piety was conducive to advancement in wealth and honours, were sure to go further in their pretensions, than the modesty of true professors could permit or excuse: but that deceitfulness of heart which produces hypocrisy, leads to all other bad conduct; and religion has been disgraced by the singular profligacy of ostentatious professors.

Knaves of the very worst kind, who have no other object than to avail themselves of the credulity of others, are likely at all times to put on a cloak and a mask, which may render them externally respectable, and facilitate their purposes of deceit. Nothing seduces the ignorant and unexperienced so easily as the appearance of extraordinary sanctity; and nothing has been more frequently assumed, for the accomplishment of ambitious and avaricious designs. When these designs have been accomplished, the cloak and the mask have been thrown aside as useless incumbrances, and the villain has stood forth in his proper shape and colour.

Men of weak heads and warm hearts have proceeded to the most extravagant lengths in pretensions to sanctity; and at the same time, from the want of solid virtue, have fallen into deplorable sins. Their sins derived additional deformity in the eyes of the people, from the contrast of assumed sanctity; and the world was ready to exclaim that all religion must be vain, if, in men who display so much of it, it contributes so little to wisdom and virtue.

Great sinners, unwilling to tread the rugged road of virtue, have thought it an easier and pleasanter mode of avoiding the consequences of their enormities, to persuade themselves of sudden conversions,

and peculiar favour from heaven; and to compensate for inward impurity by outward sanctity; and for disobedience in things essential, by intemperate zeal in things indifferent, formal, and merely ostentatious.

Thus spiritual pride, want of charity, hypocrisy, knavery, folly, and extreme wickedness, have given rise to extraordinary pretensions to the Spirit, and verified the observation, that the wickedest of mankind have been among those who displayed the appearance of goodness and piety in the extreme.

"The gradation has been," (says Dr. Trapp,) "righteous overmuch in practice—righteous overmuch in practice and doctrine—immoral and profligate in both; and this still with pretensions to extraordinary measures of the Holy Spirit."

But to what should a conviction of this truth lead the sober Christian? Certainly not to deny the doctrine of supernatural assistance, which he finds in the gospel; but to avoid all extravagance of pretension, all boasting, all over-righteousness, all preference of himself to others, on account of spiritual gifts, lest he should ultimately find himself also deceived and a deceiver.

The religion of Christ is of a retired and reserved nature. Its most important transactions are in the recesses of the heart, and in the closet. It loves not noise nor ostentation. Let him, therefore, who wishes to know whether he really has the Spirit, examine whether his virtues and good dispositions abound in retirement, and without the least parade whatever, or the smallest applause or reward of men. If he does good privately, and avoids the eyes of admirers, I think he may entertain an humble confidence that he has the favour of God. He has, in consequence, a source of joy within him, which no

man taketh away. He has the bread of life, and *feeds on it in his heart by faith with thanksgiving.* He is silently and unostentatiously happy, neither courting the notice of the world, nor regarding its unjust censure. He is particularly careful, that no ill-treatment shall cause him to violate the law of charity. His chief concern is to bear and yet forbear; to be rather than to seem good.

SECTION XLI.

Affected Sanctity, Demureness, Canting, Sourness, Censoriousness, ignorant and illiterate Preaching, no Marks of a State of Grace, but contribute to bring the whole Doctrine of Divine Energy into Contempt, and to diffuse Infidelity.

RELIGION is lovely. Her voice is melodious, and her aspect delightful. How has she been deformed! She has been taught to utter jargon with the hoarse croaking of the portentous raven, or to scream with the terrific howlings of the bird of night. Her face has been changed from the face of an angel to a gorgon's head, surrounded with snakes. She has been rendered a bugbear, terrifying all who approach her, instead of a gentle nursing mother, inviting wretched mortals to her fostering bosom, by the tenderest blandishments of maternal love.

Men of natural sense, improved by a learned education, and polished by all the elegancies of cultivated life, have turned from her, thus disguised as she appears, with disgust and horror. They have devoted themselves to a seducing philosophy, and left religion, thus disfigured, to the gross vulgar, whom they erroneously conceived were naturally attached to the horrors of a cruel and gloomy, as well as a silly, superstition.

Is it not desirable to vindicate Christianity from such dishonour? to show that her most important doctrine, the doctrine of divine energy, leads to every disposition that is gentle, amiable, and beneficent; that it exalts, refines, and mollifies the human bosom; and while it kindles a lively and ardent hope of future felicity, improves every real enjoyment of the present life? Such a representation, and it certainly is a just one, must invite every man, who feels, as he ought, for himself or others, within the Christian pale.

The Spirit is a spirit of truth, and therefore must be adverse to all affectation of sanctity, all studied severity of aspect and demeanour, intended only to excite external respect, and to impress on the spectators, often for the sake of interest, as well as from vanity, an idea of spiritual preeminence. The Spirit is a loving spirit, and therefore very unlike that of the sour, censorious pretenders, who condemn all innocent amusements, and think none capable of divine favour but themselves, and those who entertain their sentiments on points perfectly indifferent in the sight of God, and of every reasonable man. The Spirit is a spirit of wisdom, which implies a due degree of knowledge and ability for every undertaking we voluntarily engage in, and therefore cannot approve the preaching of illiterate persons, who are unacquainted, not only with the languages in which the Scriptures were written, but often with their own; who are fitter to be catechumens than catechists; to sit at the feet of Gamaliel, than to usurp his chair. Learning may not be requisite in the pious hearer, but is certainly so in every one who assumes the office of an instructor. He is not an honest man who professes and is paid to instruct others, without having exerted himself to the utmost to procure a

competent store of knowledge. The operations of the Holy Spirit, accompanying his endeavours, may make a good Christian in his private capacity; may give him faith and knowledge sufficient for his salvation; but they do not, since the time of the Apostles, bestow a knowledge of languages, or qualify alone, without the aids of human learning, for a teacher of theology.

The annals of suicide, if any such there were, and the registers of Bedlam, might bear witness to the mischiefs caused by fanatical mechanics, with strong passions and imaginations, but of feeble and narrow intellects, wildly haranguing weak and aged men and women on their lost state, on their danger of eternal damnation, and a thousand other most awful matters, which at once puzzle the understandings, and dismay the hearts of the deluded multitude. True Christianity shudders at the sufferings of well-meaning devotees, wantonly inflicted by ignorant zealots, seeking self-importance, and gratifying the pride of their hearts, as leaders of a wretched tribe, whom noise and high pretensions collect easily in every populous city, and in every poor neighbourhood, where the necessity of constant manual employment for the means of subistence, precludes all contemplation, and the improvement of judgment that might result from it.

In compassion to these people, who deserve every assistance, because they certainly intend every thing that is good, though they do and suffer great evil, through defect of judgment, I wish the regular clergy, both of the established and dissenting church, to feed them with the food in which they delight—the heavenly manna, the doctrine of grace. There is no doubt but that many of them do so occasionally; but I submit it to them whether grace ought not to be

a leading and principal topic in every discourse inculcating morality. I beg leave to suggest that EVANGELICAL preaching, in which the doctrine of divine energy must always make a very considerable part, would keep their congregations from wandering after men, who have no other qualification for preaching but zeal, real or pretended;* zeal without knowledge, or a knowledge confined, superficial, and unaccompanied with general charity or sound discretion. With all their defects, they do, however, preach the doctrine of grace. The people know this to be the genuine doctrine of the gospel, and therefore they flock by tens of thousands to hear it, regardless of the barbarism of the self-appointed orator, who leaves the loom and the last for the pulpit.

The pearl of great price, the common people, especially the methodists, estimate highly, however rudely it may be set; but how much more would they prize it, if it were set, adequately to its immense value, in the purest gold, by the hand of a master? If men of sound and extensive learning, of true taste and eloquence, were to recommend it, in a dignified, decorous manner, and with all the beauties of proper language, the field-preacher would rant in solitude, and the tabernacle would be as empty as most of the parish churches within the limits of the city of London. To them I refer the inquirer, who wishes to see how little the most decent and studied discourses on morality, or practical religion, for they are usually confounded, attract the

* "They procure attention," says Mr. Herbert, "by earnestness of speech; it being natural to men to think that where there is much earnestness, there is something worth hearing."

Their nonsense is generally dressed up in scripture phrase, which gives it an air of sanctity and solemnity. It is the ass in the lion's skin.

people. Let him leave a while his books and library, and read the volume of real life. We have had enough of words, enough of systems, enough of controversy; let us study and teach what attracts the erring multitude, what is really and efficiently useful to the mass of the people, what improves human nature, renders life as comfortable as the condition of humanity will admit, and opens a pleasing prospect, when life must be relinquished, beyond the grave.

SECTION XLII.

Bishop Lavington's Opinion respecting the Extravagancies and Follies of fanatical Preachers, and Pretenders to the Spirit.—Calmness of Temper recommended to religious Persons.—Sobriety, Moderation, and the serene Composure of a well regulated Mind.

In the cautionary part of my work I think it expedient to represent fanaticism, in its proper shape and colours, which are truly hideous. I cannot do this more effectually than in the words of Bishop Lavington, who, while a strenuous defender of the true doctrine of grace, wrote a very able treatise on purpose to explode those absurdities which were advanced in the strange journals of Whitfield and Wesley; both of them men of great abilities, and one a man of learning; but both intoxicated at one time by the flattery of multitudes, who followed in their train with a submission approaching to idolatry.

"Wherever," says the Bishop, "I find great stress laid upon some imaginary, insignificant, or unintelligible peculiarities; the word of God turned into a conjuring-book; the divine ordinances either lightly esteemed, or imputed to the devil; good works either undervalued or trodden under foot; wild-fire dangerously tossed about, instead of that

light which came down from heaven; puffing pretensions to extraordinary revelations, inspirations, usurping the name of the Holy One; with personal conferences with God, face to face; enthusiastic ranters, comparing themselves with prophets and apostles, if not with Christ himself; the most wild and extravagant behaviour, the phrensies of a disturbed brain or deluded imagination, the effects of fits, of a weak head, or diseased body, all turned into so many tests and marks of saintship; the spirit of pride and vanity possessing the leaders; a spirit of envy, rancour, broils, and implacable animosities, dashing each other in pieces; a spirit of bitterness and uncharitableness towards the rest of mankind; a progress through immorality, scepticism, infidelity, atheism, through spiritual desertions, despair, and madness, made the gate of perfection; an imaginary new-birth to be brought to pass by means of real tortures, of some of the most exquisite pangs and sufferings that can affect human nature:—I say, where these are found, and many more equally horrible, one may easily discern a wide difference between such a dispensation and genuine religion; as well as the bungling hands that are substituting the former in the place of the other. One may easily see what strangers such inconsistent ramblers must be to the true devotion, as well as the comforts of a sedate, composed piety; to a firm belief of our Maker and Redeemer, and a constant reliance upon Providence: to a steady course of sincere, habitual, and unaffected religion; to the cherishing of a warm love of God in the heart, and well-tempered zeal for the truths of his inspired word; and all this proved by the love of our neighbour; to a general observance and attendance on the means of grace, and a well-grounded hope of glory."

From the wretched follies of fanatics, the mind turns with complacency to the gentle, benignant Spirit which guided a Bishop Wilson, a Watts, a Doddridge, a Nelson, and a Horne. Such men do honour to the doctrine of grace, and rescue it from the contempt under which it has fallen on the one hand, through the extravagance of weak devotees; and, on the other, from the unhappy ingenuity* of scholastic theologists, explaining away, to show their skill, or to answer the political purposes of the passing hour, the strongest expressions of holy Scripture.

SECTION XLIII.

Pride the great Obstacle to the general Reception of the Gospel of Grace.

A PROUD, turbulent, and vindictive spirit is utterly incompatible with the spirit of Christianity; but a proud, turbulent, and vindictive spirit constitutes what is called, in the world, a man of honour; and who can aspire at the distinctions and rewards which the world has to bestow, without aspiring at the character of a man of honour—without zealously maintaining it, in defiance of all which the Scriptures have taught us to consider as the will of God? No wonder, then, that the genuine gospel, the doctrine of the Spirit, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, should be utterly neglected by those who are more solicitous about the opinion of a few weak and wicked mortals like themselves, than about all that Christianity promises or threatens; who regard neither God nor man, when their own self-estimation is in the smallest

* *Curiosa infelicitas.*

degree depreciated.* Submission of the temper and understanding, which is necessary for the reception of that evidence of Christianity which the Holy Ghost affords, is considered as contemptible meanness, by those who are full of themselves, and live only to flatter, for the sake of being reflattered, in the fashionable circles of self-idolizing vanity.

The doctrine of a participation with the divine nature, conceded by Heaven to the faithful and pious of low degree, is highly mortifying to those who think the perfection of human nature consists in civil nobility, in blood, or in titles conferred by an earthly monarch, however weak, wicked, and mischievous he may be. He who shares the divine nature, who is favoured with an emanation of Deity, is truly ennobled; for his very nature is exalted above the ordinary rank of humanity; and according to the gospel, he is become the living temple of the Holy Ghost. That a poor man, such as were the apostles, and such as are many true Christians in the present day, should possess a nature raised above whatever earthly honours can bestow, is a doctrine offensive to all who have been taught to consider, as the chief good of man, the gratification of the pride of life.

Scholars also, deep mathematicians, metaphysicians, and logicians, feel a sentiment of scorn, when they are told that a plain, simple, humble peasant, whose mind is rightly disposed, may receive a portion of divine illumination, which shall contribute more to sound wisdom, and consequently to happiness, than all their minute and laborious disquisitions. Philosophy, towering, like Icarus, on wings made by

* "Such doctrines (the doctrines peculiar to Christianity) must be received with scorn and derision, as an insolent claim to superiority of understanding, over those whom the world pronounces wise and discerning." LELAND.

the art of man, to the clouds, looks down with contempt on religion, who associates with ignorant persons, distinguished by humility of rank as much as by humility of disposition. Philosophy leaves the company of a personage so mean, and frequently passes from a contempt of her, to downright hatred and enmity.

Thus pride is a chief obstacle to the reception of the doctrine of evangelical grace. Pride blinds the eyes of the understanding against the evidence of the Holy Ghost. Pride causes hardness of heart, a quality the most odious to the divine, and most injurious to the human nature. It teaches us to behold our inferiors, not only as not of the same flesh and blood with ourselves;* not only as little entitled to the comforts and advantages of this life; but as unworthy of partaking with us in the divine favour, and the happiness of a glorified state. The doctrine of grace is considered by the men of the world, and the rulers of it, intoxicated with power, as too great a leveller, to be freely admitted consistently with their own ideas of exclusive privileges, or of worldly policy.† It must therefore be cried down, wherever their authority can prevail.‡

* ——"Non animos et corpora nostrâ
"Materiâ constare putat, paribusque elementis." JUV.
What! cries her grace—are then the swinish herd
Made of such flesh and blood as we?—absurd!
Are souls like ours to vulgar wretches given?
I would not keep such company in Heaven.

This spirit of pride is apt to conceive the multitude, the canaille, that is, the poor, to whom the gospel was preached, as only FOOD FOR POWDER.

† Yet they should remember, that death is a greater leveller, and one whom no policy or power can escape.

‡ *How can ye* BELIEVE, *which receive honour one of another?* John, v. 44.

Men lean on reeds, when they rely solely on each other for hap-

But surely their objection does it honour. It shows that the doctrine is favourable to the whole human race; that it is not narrow, partial, unjust; but, like the Author of all good, whence it flows, accepts not the persons of men, neither regards the transient and petty distinctions of rank, but shows favour to the meek and lowly, and to all that are good and true of heart, whether in the palace or in the cottage.

Take comfort, ye poor and despised brethren; for God, by his gospel, has promised to bestow on you riches and honours, durable as they are solid, and such as no earthly power can confer or alienate: and would to Heaven that they, who trust in worldly riches and honours, could but behold in a true light, their real poverty and dishonourable state, when destitute of grace, or, in other words destitute of the favour of the Almighty Sovereign, the Lord of Lords, and the King of Kings!

SECTION XLIV.

The universal Prevalence of the Holy Spirit—the genuine Grace of the Gospel—highly conducive to the Happiness of CIVIL SOCIETY, *as well as of Individuals.*

It always appeared to me an absurdity, that men should act in their corporate capacity on such principles as, in their individual and private state, they would deem profligate. Public acts are the acts of private men; and wherever public acts are immoral and unchristian, it may be concluded, that those

piness and honour. Indeed, what real honour can one poor lost creature receive from another, who is exactly in the same lost condition with himself, if both be without GRACE?

Whatsoever ye do, do all to the GLORY *of God.* 1 Cor. x. 31.

who sanction them in a body, are, as separate members, insincere friends of virtue, and hypocritical professors of religion. Offensive war, and treacherous violation of the most solemn treaties, could never be countenanced by whole nations of Christians, if the individuals were actuated by the sentiments of true Christianity.*

It has been said, that we are not to look for the effects of Christianity in national acts or public councils. Why not? Are they not men and Christians, who perform national acts, and compose public councils? When a man gives a vote for any public measure, or advises the supreme magistrate, does he drop the Christian in the voter or the counsellor? Common sense revolts at the idea of the same men's renouncing their identity, splitting themselves into several characters, and acting in one inconsistently with their most serious duties and solemn engagements in another, which, at the same time, they profess zealously to support. Misery unutterable arises to the human race, from this duplicity. The sanctity assumed in one character throws a false glare and varnish over the villainy practised in the other, and makes it pass current by authority.

A man who is a real Christian, not a political conformist only, will be a Christian in his public conduct, as well as in his private. He will be a Christian statesman and member of parliament, no less than a Christian father, husband, and neighbour.

Now, no man is a Christian in name only, when his Christianity arises from the operation and evidence of the Holy Ghost. His very heart is con-

* "Magistrate, or minister, or lawyer, or merchant, or artificer, or whatsoever thou art, remember that thou art withal a Christian." Bp. SANDERSON.

verted. The whole man is renewed. He is no longer a proud, selfish, cruel being, greedily seeking his own fancied gratification at the expense of other men's happiness, but guided in all his conduct by the sentiment of love or benevolent affection, called, in Scripture, charity. The law of kindness governs all his actions. His wisdom is gentle; and he uses power, if he possesses it, in imitation of the all-powerful Being above, in diffusing blessings among all who are within the sphere of his influence.

Suppose, then, kings and rulers of all descriptions under the benign operation of the Christian spirit, and consequently firm believers and defenders of Christianity. Unjust and unnecessary wars* immediately cease. The prophecies of Isaiah are accomplished. Swords and spears are converted into pruning-hooks and plough-shares. The lion dandles the lamb, without an inclination to devour it.

The people, feeling the blessings of such government, and actuated by the gentle affections of charity, become cordially attached to it, and to each other. Universal tranquillity reigns. The whole society, both the governed and governing, cooperate in adding to the comforts and diminishing the evils of life; piety to God, and love to man, display the vital efficacy of the gospel, and prove that it is not a cunningly devised fable, invented by priests for the support of kingly power; but the lively energy of God, actuating the human bosom, and restoring man to that perfection of nature by the second Adam;

* Homer has certain epithets, which the critics call perpetua epitheta; they have no particular meaning in the places where they are used, but accompany the substantives like shadows. The epithets just and necessary being applied to all wars, may be numbered among the perpetua epitheta of Homer.

Righteousness exalteth a nation. Proverbs, xiv. 34.

which was lost by the disobedience of the first in Paradise.

The truest patriotism, therefore, is to revive or diffuse genuine Christianity; to teach men to seek and to find the grace of God through Christ Jesus. This is the philosophy which should be taught from the chairs of our universities, and the pulpits of our churches. It would not then fall to the illiterate and fanciful mechanic, who often disgraces it, not only by ignorance of all other science, but too often by a violence of passion and malignity of temper, which seem to evince that he does not possess what he so warmly recommends to his audience.

Christianity is so far from unfitting man for society, as the calumniators have said, that its graces and virtues are peculiarly social. It teaches every thing that is just and kind. It is the false, mistaken, hypocritical, and, above all, the political Christianity, which has been the cause of mischief and misery. This has ever been used as a cloak for maliciousness. But where the Spirit of God, the living gospel of immediate grace, goes hand in hand with the written gospel, there every thing lovely, friendly, and beneficial, is the natural and unavoidable result. The root is good, and the fruit delicious and salubrious in the highest degree. May the tree spread its umbrageous branches over the land, and all the people take refuge and seek solace under its expanded foliage! The throne that is established in righteousness is fixed on the rock of ages; and the people who have the Lord for their God and King, shall never know the woes of captivity and desolation.*

* "The political views of Constantine, in the establishment of Christianity, were to attach the subjects of the empire more firmly to himself and his successors, and the several nations which com-

Christian Philosophy purifies society by purifying the fountain of all human actions, the heart of man. Heathen philosophy often consisted of nothing more than fine sayings, pleasing to the imagination, but leaving the heart uninfluenced and the conduct unreformed.

Some of those heathens, who wrote fine morality, it is well known, practised, and even obliquely recommended, with all the charms of wit and eloquence, vices which degrade man below the brute.

SECTION XLV.

Of Holiness—its true Meaning, and absolute Necessity.

Let a man's mind be holy, and he will not doubt one moment of the truth of Christianity. It is not enough that it be learned or sagacious; it must be holy; and then the more learned or the more sagacious, so much the more firmly will its belief be fixed, and so much the better enabled to extend the faith. Bacon, Boyle, Locke, Newton, Milton, Addison, Lord Chief Justice Hale, possessed intellects as vigorous as ever fell to the lot of human beings; but they were educated piously as well as learnedly, according to the manners of their times. They lived holily; the Spirit of Grace took early possession of their hearts, and they became not only believers but defenders of

posed it, to one another, by the bonds of a religion common to all of them; to soften the ferocity of the armies; to reform the licentiousness of the provinces; and, by infusing a spirit of moderation and submission to government, to extinguish those principles of avarice and ambition, of injustice and violence, by which so many factions were formed, and the peace of the empire so often and so fatally broken. No religion was ever so well proportioned, nor so well directed, as that of Christianity seemed to be, to all these purposes. Lord Bolingbroke.

the faith. Not to their learning, but to their holiness, be the glory. They saw God by the eye of faith, not of philosophy.*

There is one qualification, without which we shall never be admitted to the favour of God, or to felicity in the mansions of future glory, and it is HOLINESS: without this, we read, no man shall see the Lord. *Follow* PEACE *with* ALL *men, and* HOLINESS, *without which, no man shall see the Lord.*†

No words can be plainer and more express than these. A question naturally arises in the mind of every thinking man, in what consists this quality, which is indispensably necessary to securing the beatific privilege of enjoying the divine presence? What is holiness?

The excellent Joseph Mede informs us, that "sanctity, or holiness, imports discrimination,—or distinction from other things by way of exaltation and preeminence."‡

God himself is originally, absolutely, and essentially HOLY; man, only by communication.

Holiness I therefore understand to be that state, in which God vouchsafes to man his Holy Spirit, and discriminates him from those who, rejecting his offers

* Such men (when in the church, i. e. when ordained ministers) highly reverence the true use of every thing that is outward in religion; but, like the Psalmist's daughter, they are all-glorious within—they break open the whited sepulchre, they awaken the heart, and show all its filth and rottenness of death; but they leave it not, till the kingdom of heaven is raised up within it.

† Heb. xii. 14.

‡ Thus Kimchi, on Isaiah, lvi. 2.

"קדוש שבת להבדילו משאר הימים"

"To sanctify the sabbath, is to separate it from other days."

"מאחר במעלה כי כן כל לשון קדושה הוא ענין הבדלה"

"Because all words of sanctity import a thing separated from other things by way of preeminence or excellency."

Vide MEDE's Works, vol. i. p. 8.

of grace, presumptuously adhere to the world and its vanities; who neglect religion entirely, and who live without God in the world, despisers of his grace. To be holy, is to be refined, by the Spirit of God, from the corruptions of the world; to be separated from sin and impurity, like the metal from the base alloy.

He, therefore, who would see the Lord, must, by obedience, seek the manifestation of the Spirit, by prayer obtain the divine assistance, and thus be admitted to a participation of the divine nature; *according as his* DIVINE POWER *hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue; whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might be* PARTAKERS OF THE DIVINE NATURE, having escaped the CORRUPTION that is in the world through lust.*

The happy state of holiness constitutes the true dignity of human nature. This at once purifies and elevates it. The man who possesses it, enjoys this world with calm complacency, while he rises superior to it, and hopes for a better in reversion. He acts rightly, yet never rigidly; he always tempers justice with kindness and mercy; his whole behaviour is gentle, flowing from an internal principle of benevolence. The fear of God and the love of man operate on his heart as the main springs of all his activity. To express his conduct in scripture language, he does justice, loves mercy, and walks humbly with his God.

Behaviour thus amiable and beneficent is the surest proof of holiness. Great pretensions, sanctimonious deportment, a rigid observance of external ceremonies, and a pertinacious adherence to par-

* 2 Pet. i. 4.

ticular doctrines, are all consistent with an unholy state, with self-deceit, and with hypocrisy. But he who is kindly affectioned to his fellow-creatures with brotherly love; he who is unostentatiously pious, and displays the fruits of the Spirit by good works, he can entertain little doubt of seeing God; seeing the truth of his word, and enjoying his presence in the living temple of his heart, thus consecrated by the influence of the Holy Ghost.

A delightful serenity attends that state of holiness, which arises from an humble confidence in God; such as would render it devoutly to be wished for, if its consequences extended only to the pleasurable enjoyment of this life. It causes our journey to resemble a passage through those charming countries, where the air is genially soft, the sky clear, and the prospect variegated with every beauty of nature. The cold, shivering, self-dependent mortal, who walks through the world all solitary, who has not God for his friend and companion, may be compared to the forlorn savage, prowling for prey far from the solar beam, in the regions near the pole. How would he rejoice in the warm sunshine and sweet serenity of an Italian climate?

SECTION XLVI.

Of a good Heart.

THE most desirable treasure which a human being can possess, whether he has regard to his own happiness or to those around him, is a GOOD HEART. In every situation, and under all circumstances, this will furnish a store of sweets which the wicked cannot obtain, and delicious though it is, would not relish, so vitiated is their taste. A good heart com-

municates liberally the pleasures it enjoys; blessed or blessing under all circumstances and in every period of life.*

But what constitutes a good heart? The grace of God operating upon it. The mild, gentle, healing spirit of the gospel; or, to use the language of Scripture, the UNCTION of the HOLY GHOST, mollifying its hardness, and preserving it from corruption. This it is which forms a good heart, and a good heart is a land of Canaan to itself, a land flowing with milk and honey.

All the irascible passions are, in their excess, diabolical. They are the fruitful sources of misery. They would unparadise the garden of Eden, and turn the cheerful light of Heaven into gloomy darkness, like the shadow in the valley of death. There is in the world much natural evil; there are pains, and diseases enough, to wean the heart from the immoderate love of it; but none of them are productive of wretchedness so great and difficult of cure as the malignant passions of pride, envy, and revenge. These estrange man from man, and convert the haunts of human creatures into dens of foxes and wolves. Cheats, calumniators, robbers, murderers, in all their variety and degrees of flagitiousness, are characters naturally flowing from hearts unsoftened, unenlightened, unhallowed by the Spirit of Grace.

But behold the Christian. Gentleness and sweetness beam from his eyes, and illumine his countenance with a mild lustre. Good humour predominates in all his demeanour. He has no concealed rage rankling in his bosom; he has no sinister and selfish

* Natural evil will, indeed, interrupt the felicity and impede the beneficence of the best men; and here we can only weep over human nature, and wait with patience for that state when tears shall be wiped from all eyes.

views, under a studied openness of countenance. He converses with a generous frankness. His bosom is transparent. You are perfectly safe with him. He will serve you, if possible, as well as please you; but he will never injure you purposely, or give you the smallest pain. He feels complacency in all the good he sees around him, and delights in augmenting it. His treasure is within him. His interest is in Heaven. His ambition is for objects above the world; so that nothing in it is of value enough, in his estimation, to tempt him to resign the tranquillity of innocence, to renounce the pleasures of a friendly and benevolent disposition. He has all the ingenuous simplicity of the infantine age, and you delight in him, as in the harmless babe, who sports around you, and expresses his pains and pleasures according to the dictates of uncorrupted nature.*

Such is man, when his natural asperities are smoothed, and his inborn bitterness sweetened by the benign operation of celestial influence. Compared with the mere natural man, he is an angel. Is it not desirable thus to raise human nature, and thus to improve society; thus to render the earthly existence almost an anticipation of what our imperfect imaginations picture of the heavenly? Heathen philosophy cannot effect it. Heathen philosophy is confined to a few, in comparison with the myriads that compose the great mass of human beings; who weary themselves in pursuit of happiness on this terraqueous

* Goodness is, in Scripture, a characteristic quality of the third Person of the Trinity.—Power, wisdom, goodness, these constitute a glorious Trinity, whether called a Platonic or a Christian Trinity. Can there be harm in adoring power in God the Father, wisdom in God the Son, goodness in God the Holy Ghost; power, wisdom, and goodness combined in the Tri-une Deity, equally the objects of love and reverence to man, whether acting conjunctly or separately in his creation, his redemption, or his sanctification.

globe. The experiment has been tried by the philosophers of all ages, and failed. But religion can effect it. Yet what religion? A religion founded on historical faith, and heathen morality? No; it must be a vital religion—a divine influence on the heart, which is plainly promised and announced in the glad tidings of the gospel. This is the true euangelion, or good news,* to the human race. It is authenticated by the written gospel, and there is a witness within us which renders it unquestionable. Happy they who have obeyed the voice which commands, saying, "My son, give me thy HEART!"† When the heart is devoted to Christ, the understanding will make no resistance to his doctrines, but humbly acknowledge the most inexplicable mysteries to be above, yet not contrary to, reason.‡

* What news was it to mankind to tell them what Pythagoras, Socrates, Epictetus, Cicero, and many others, had told them before —the expediency of moral virtue, justice, temperance, fortitude, all which are often most conducive to worldly prosperity. The glad tidings were the announcing the comfort and assistance of the Holy Ghost, redemption, pardon, peace, and the resurrection. This was an evangelion or acceptable message brought from heaven by him who had the SPIRIT WITHOUT MEASURE (*). *Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in* NO CASE *enter into the kingdom of Heaven.* Matth. v. 20. But the righteousness (or morality) of the heathens was that of the Scribes and Pharisees. It was the righteousness of the law, not of the gospel.

† Proverbs, xxiii. 26.

‡ "This man best understands the secret and undiscernable economy; he FEELS this unintelligible mystery, and sees with his HEART what his tongue can never express, and his metaphysics can never prove." Bishop TAYLOR.

(*) John, iii. 34.

SECTION XLVII.

On the Superior Morality of the Christian Philosophy.

THE operation of divine grace being no other than the melioration of our hearts, the purifying of the very fountain of our actions, it must of necessity lead to the practice of virtue, or, in the language of Scripture, to GOOD WORKS. It is a gross calumny to say that the true doctrine of grace* is unfavourable to morality. It inevitably produces every thing that is lovely and useful in social intercourse. The Holy Spirit's residence in the heart is inconsistent with vice and malevolence. It requires, indispensably, both personal purity and social love: and they who endeavour to obtain it, must begin and persevere in the practice of every moral virtue.

The love of God and of mankind are the two main springs which actuate every Christian, who is regenerated by grace.

The love of God was not enforced by heathen philosophy. The love of man was indeed frequently, though feebly, recommended; but at the same time, many dispositions of mind were held honourable, and worthy of cultivation, which are often inconsistent with the love of man. Such are valour in offensive war, revenge, love of glory, and of conquest

The love of God must have the most favourable influence on moral conduct; for no obedience is so perfect as that which arises from affection. It is the

* "There is, indeed," says Dr. Owen, "great plea (or outcry among the opponents of our doctrine) for moral virtue. I wish it were more out of love to virtue itself, than out of a design to cast contempt on the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, as it is delivered by the faithful dispensers of it."

alert, cordial, sincere obedience of a dutiful child to a tender parent. It anticipates his will, and is desirous, in its honest zeal to please, of going even beyond the line prescribed by parental authority.

And what is the love of God, but the love of goodness, purity, rectitude? Love not only admires, but endeavours to imitate, the object of its affection. The love of God, therefore, produces a conduct as godlike as the condition of infirm humanity can admit. Hence St. John says, very strongly and truly, "This is the LOVE of GOD, that we keep his commandments." It is a natural and unavoidable consequence of loving the supreme perfection, that we imitate the qualities in which it consists—purity, justice, mercy, every thing that we can conceive of perfect goodness and beauty. Such is the first hinge of Christian morality.

And the second resembles it, in its benign effects on human nature, and the state of society.

It is the love of our fellow-creatures; not merely FRIENDSHIP, which is often founded only on petty interest and mutual amusement; but universal philanthropy, extending even to enemies. Every man under the operation of this liberal affection, is considered and cherished as a FRIEND and neighbour. We are taught by it to love others as ourselves, and to do to them as we wish they should do to us.

This extensive law of love is peculiar to our lawgiver, the blessed Jesus. He calls it a new commandment. He makes it the distinguishing characteristic of the gospel. He proposes his own example, to enforce obedience to it. "This is my commandment," says he, "that ye love one another as I have loved you."

But neither the love of God nor the love of man will exist in our hearts, in a due degree of ardour or

sincerity, without the divine influence. The natural man loves the world and himself too well to admit, whatever he may pretend or profess, affections so liberal, sublime, and disinterested. He loves MAMMON more than God; and as for the love of his fellow-creatures, he wears a false appearance of it, a studied politeness, courteousness, and affability, for the sake of availing himself of their assistance in gratifying avarice, ambition, and the love of pleasure; but he hates, envies, or utterly neglects, all who contribute neither to his sordid gain, or to his personal gratification. Grace alone can soften and liberalize his contracted bosom. Grace alone can render him sincerely, secretly, and impartially virtuous; and the best Christian is the best member of civil society.

Let him who doubts the excellence of Christian morality, read our Saviour's sermon on the mount, with the discourses formed upon it by Blair,* Blackall, and other great divines of the English church. He will be struck with its preeminent beauty and utility. Indeed the whole body of English sermons founded on the gospel, exhibits a system of morality which the world never saw before, and which would never have existed without the evangelical code. I earnestly recommend to general perusal Bishop Gastrell's little book, entitled *Christian Institutes*. Seneca, Epictetus, and all the pagan moralists must hide their diminished heads on the comparison with the *Christian Philosophy* there exhibited.

* James Blair, M. A. President of William and Mary College, in America. His sermons were first published by himself in 1722, and afterwards, in 1740, by the very learned Dr. Waterland. See particularly the *paraphrase*, in the first volume, on Matt. v. vi. vii.

SECTION XLVIII.

The true Genius and Spirit of Christianity productive of a certain Tenderness of Conscience, *or Feeling of Rectitude, more favourable to right Conduct, than any Deductions of unassisted Reason, or heathen Morality.*

A MAN, rightly disposed by the influence of genuine Christianity, becomes a law* unto himself, in all circumstances and situations. A divine temper, superinduced by divine energy on the heart, produces right conduct, just as a tree grafted with a kindly cion, brings forth fruit both delicious and salutary, under the natural operation of showers and sunshine.

A true Christian has constantly impressed upon his mind a sense of God's presence, and a conviction that he is responsible to his Father in heaven for all his conduct. This keeps him in awe, mixed with love. He fears to do wrong, not with a servile fear, but an affectionate reverence for his all-powerful friend, who has shown him great favour, and at the same time required, in return for it, obedience to his injunctions, as a condition of its continuance. He loves God from his heart; an affection, which comprehends in it the love of every thing that is good in moral conduct, every thing pure and holy in his own person, every thing beneficent to society.

The residence of the Holy Ghost in the Christian's heart increases his moral sensibility. He sees with

* "God," says Dr. John Jeffery, "might have delivered the doctrine of our religion, in a body of laws, like that of JUSTINIAN." He probably would have done so, if he had intended the gospel to be a complete code of moral law; but he evidently intended that a living teacher, even the Spirit, should accompany the historical gospel in all ages, and supply all our wants of instruction according to the occasion.

greater acuteness the good and beautiful* in behaviour; he feels with additional vivacity the emotions of benevolence. It gives him pain, it does violence to his very nature, thus sublimed, to act basely, unjustly, unkindly. He knows that the divine principle within him will not inhabit a polluted shrine; but will take offence† and depart, if the temple be profaned by immorality.

Casuistry, or long and abstruse reasonings on the moral fitness or unfitness of actions, are totally unnecessary to the man whom the heavenly teacher has instructed. His determinations admit not such cold delay or doubtful hesitation. His heart turns, like the needle to the pole, with tremulous, yet certain propensity, to the point of rectitude. From the infirmity of human nature, and the violence of temptation, he may decline a little to the right or to the left; but the attraction of Heaven and virtue still acts upon and prevents his total aberration. Touched by Heaven, he acquires a kind of polarity, which causes him to point thither without any inclination to deviate.

Hence he is above the schools of the heathen moralists. He displays that superiority which Jesus Christ most justly claims over Socrates. Yet he may enjoy the beautiful compositions of the ancients, if his education has enabled him to understand them. He may be pleased and instructed with their fine observations on life and manners, and the great advances they made in ethics, by the light of nature. But though he may derive great benefit from them, though he may be both informed and advised by

* Καλοκαγαθιαν.

† "*Res delicata est Dei Spiritus.*"—The Spirit of God is delicate, *i. e.* easily disgusted with moral impurity. TERTULL.

them, yet he sees them defective,* and finds that they are not absolutely necessary to accomplish the Christian, who, by the written word of Scripture, accompanied by the Spirit's ministration, becomes sufficiently enlightened for the practice of the purest morality, and wise unto salvation. By Christian philosophy, he experiences not only illumination, but assistance; he is taught the way that he should go, and led by the hand in his journey.

I conclude, then, from this tender sensibility to right and wrong, and this propensity to kindness, which the supernatural agency of the Spirit causes in the heart, that true Christianity, such as is founded on the vital influence of the Spirit, makes the best moralists, the most useful and worthiest members of society. And as Christian philosophy is attainable by all, and not confined to the rich or the learned, it appears to me, that even politicians, who consider only prosperity and peace of nations, would evince the highest wisdom, in first cultivating it themselves, and then encouraging it, by all prudent modes, among the people. What a feeble system is that of the French *Theophilanthropists* divested, as they pretend it is, of evangelical authority!

When a whole community shall become, by the preaching of evangelical doctrines, and the example of the great, subject to the power of conscience, warmed with the love of God, and all mankind, "just and good, true and sincere, meek, humble, tender-hearted and compassionate, content, temperate, pure and heavenly-minded, then will men become each a law to himself," and all civil government

* Life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel. There is also in the gospel, the perfect example of Jesus Christ; and example teaches better than precept. They who preach merely in the manner of Cicero and Antoninus are the apostles of Deism.

will be greatly facilitated, while the general happiness is secured without wars and fightings, without tumult and discord, without capital punishments, without any of that severe coercion, which creates partial evil for the sake of the general security.

Such a state, it will be said, is chimerical and Utopian. I fear, in the present corruptions of Christianity, it may be visionary. But every approach to it is desirable, as it is an approach to the happiness and perfection to which man is formed to aspire; and therefore, it will behove all those who possess power, not for sordid purposes, but the general good, to hasten and extend the reign of grace. They should say with heart as well as voice, looking unto Jesus, THY KINGDOM COME.

SECTION XLIX.

The great Advantage of Christian Philosophy being taught by a commanding Authority.

WHEN mere men teach, they submit their lessons to the judgment of their hearers, who usually assume the office of critics, while they appear in the character of disciples. They will learn only what pleases their taste, or is approved by their judgment. But Jesus Christ, being filled with the Spirit of God, taught with commanding authority. "I and the Father are one," says he. "I speak not of myself, but of him that sent me. WHOSO KEEPETH MY SAYINGS SHALL NOT TASTE OF DEATH."

What heathen philosopher ever dared to come forward as a teacher of mankind, with such weighty words as these? But it will be found, that however a few among mankind may be disposed to listen to calm reasonings, the great mass is most effectually taught

what is fair and what is base, what is useful and what pernicious, by the voice of well-founded authority.

The Scriptures, especially those of the New Testament, have long obtained this authority. We read them, not as we read any other book, of the wisest of mortals; not as judges, empowered to condemn or approve; but as pupils or dependents listen to the commands of an acknowledged master, whom they, at the same time, love and fear; and whose commands, they are sensible, are for their good, however disagreeable the duty required. We consult the gospel as an oracle. But we do not so consult the Dialogues of Plato, or the Manual of Epictetus.

"There are," says the author of the Light of Nature pursued, "many excellent sentiments of God and morality interspersed in the writings of the ancients: but those writings are studied by few, and read chiefly for curiosity and amusement, regarded as ingenious compositions, showing a sagacity and justness of thought in the authors. They make some impression in the reading, which quickly dies away again, upon laying the book aside; as Tully tells us was his case, with respect to Plato upon the immortality of the soul. Whereas the Testament is the first book we are taught to read, to receive as the oracle of God, containing the way to salvation, which, at our almost PERIL, we must not disregard, and the truth whereof it is a sin to doubt: therefore, whatever is drawn thence, comes accompanied with a reverence, and idea of high importance, which give a force to the impression. Let a man take for his thesis the stoical maxim, *Things out of our power are nothing to us*, and descant upon the imprudence of solicitude and anxiety for future events, which we can no ways prevent or provide against, it will not work the effects which the very same discourse might do,

pronounced from the PULPIT, upon the text, *Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*"

Where is the uninspired philosopher, who can address mankind with the authority of St. Paul? "My speech and my preaching," says he to the Corinthians, "is not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but with demonstration of the Spirit and power, that your faith might not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God (accompanying and enforcing my words.) We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which none of the princes of this world knew, but which God hath revealed unto us by his Spirit, the τα βαθη του θεου, the depths of God. We have received, *not the spirit of the world,* but the Spirit which is of God; that we might KNOW the things that are freely given to us of God; which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth, explaining the things of the Spirit,* (the instructions of the Spirit,) in the language of the Spirit."† Again, to the Ephesians he says, "The mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets, by the Spirit."‡ "For this cause," (he adds in another place,) "thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the WORD OF GOD, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the *word of men,* but *as it is in truth,* the WORD OF GOD."§ He gives also a menacing admonition to those who should despise his directions, as despising not man, but God. "HE THAT DESPISETH, DESPISETH NOT MAN, BUT GOD, WHO HATH GIVEN UNTO US HIS HOLY SPIRIT."‖

* See Wolf. Cur. Critic. in Loc. and Chapman's Eusebius.
† 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5. 7, 8. 10. 12, 13. ‡ Ephes. iii. 5.
§ 1 Thess. ii. 13. ‖ 1 Thess. iv. 8.

Such is the commanding authority with which Christianity addresses itself to men, including, in its peculiar doctrines and sublime mysteries, the finest ethics, though not systematically delivered, which the world ever saw. Let it be considered what an advantage it is to have even the best heathen morality inculcated with the sanction of commandments from the all-wise and all-powerful Creator. Such is now the case where Christianity prevails. And would it be wise, even in a political sense, though policy is a very inferior consideration, to suffer a mode of teaching men to be just and good, thus efficacious, thus firmly and extensively established, to fall into neglect? When will the politicians of the world again obtain so powerful an engine? What have they to substitute, if they break or take away the main spring of this most efficacious, long-tried machine? I beg leave to apologize for using so degrading a term. I am speaking, in their own language, to the worldly-wise, who despise the gospel.

Some universal, authoritative code of moral law is wanted to instruct the million, high and low, rich and poor, with great and certain effect. What teacher, from the schools of philosophy, ancient or modern, if he deprive us of Christianity, can supply the defect? Will he not strive to supply it, but suffer mankind to lapse into ignorance, barbarism, and brutality? He may give us a laboured system. But nothing which the most ingenious and learned can invent, however excellent its rules and precepts, can gain the advantage which Christianity already possesses by its authority alone. Time, and the concurrence of whole nations, have combined with its own excellence to render it impressive beyond any human system. It is adapted to the poor and

unlearned,* of which the majority of mankind, in all ages and countries, consist. It speaks to them as a voice from Heaven, and it will be heard.

But its authority must be infinitely increased, when men shall be convinced that the written gospel is accompanied at the present hour, and will be to the end of time, with the ministration of the Spirit, the actual operation of the Holy Ghost, vivifying and illuminating the divine principle within us. Christian philosophy is a sun; while all other, to use the poet's language, is, comparatively, but "darkness visible."

Christ taught as one having authority. *Christ spake as never man spake;* and they who hear him with faith, will, through the operation of the Holy Ghost, possess a wisdom and a happiness which man never knew how to bestow, and can never take away.

SECTION L.

Morality, or Obedience to the Commandments of God in social Intercourse and Personal Conduct, remarkably insisted upon in the Gospel.

THAT most injurious calumny, which asserts that the doctrine of grace is unfavourable to the purest virtue and the most beneficent behaviour in civil society, must be refuted in the mind of every reasonable and impartial man, who attends to the following passages of Scripture:

"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, HE IT IS THAT LOVETH ME. If ye love me, keep

* But under the management of some persons, as Erasmus observes, EST INGENIOSA RES ESSE CHRISTIANUM; it requires a great deal of ingenuity to be a Christian; as the TREE OF KNOWLEDGE was once preferred to the TREE OF LIFE, so learning is preferred to piety; and as *Grotius* expresses it—*ex* RELIGIONE ARS FACTA EST.—RELIGION IS MADE AN ART by many, as it has by some, a trade.

my commandments. If a man love me, he will keep my words. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed. Hereby do we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. Every man that has his hope in him, purifieth himself. Little children let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous; he that committeth sin is of the devil. Whosoever is born of God, sinneth not; whosoever doth not righteousness, is not of God. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this—to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world. Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."*

It were easy to cite a great many more passages of the same moral importance; but the written gospel is in the hands of all, and there no one can search, with a fair and candid mind, without finding the purest virtue enforced on the strongest motives that can possibly actuate a human creature.

The truth is, that the very same care and caution, the same virtuous exertions, are necessary to Christians, as if there were no supernatural and auxiliary interposition. Our endeavours must not be relaxed in the smallest degree. The difference and advantage lies in the result and effect of our endeavours.

* John, xiv. 15. 1 John, ii. 3. 5, &c. Jam. i. 27. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. Eph. v. 5, 6.

Under the divine influence, they will certainly be attended with success. They will promote our happiness infallibly. The choice of our conduct must be voluntary, and our perseverance and labour must be directed by the purest motives, and the most steady, regular, and careful diligence, just as if we depended upon ourselves; while, at the same time, they are animated and supported by humble confidence in heavenly favour. No remissness is allowed on our part, in consequence of God's favour. We are to work out our salvation with the utmost solicitude, knowing that he who gives us his grace, may, upon failure of our best endeavours, withdraw it, and leave us in a state of woeful desertion. Libertinism can avail itself of no such doctrines as these, which, in the very first instance, most emphatically recommend purity of heart, the fountain of all external action.

It is remarkable of the gospel, that it teaches obedience to human law, and every moral virtue, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.*

* Archbishop Tillotson says, in his zeal, doubtless to oppose the Antinomians: "MORALITY is the NEW CREATURE spoken of in the New Testament. Morality is all in all in the Christian religion. The Christian religion is the law of nature revived and perfected. The fruits of the Spirit are the same with the moral virtues. Grace and virtue are but two names that signify the same thing." *See various passages in* TILLOTSON'S *Sermons.*

The archbishop here very injudiciously depreciates Christianity in his endeavour to identify it with heathen philosophy and natural religion. But I cite his opinions in this place on the moral excellence of the Christian religion, merely as a testimony against those who insinuate that the true evangelical doctrines are unfavorable to morality. The great Tillotson, we see, affirms that morality is all in all in the Christian religion.

SECTION LI.

Unbelievers not to be addressed merely with subtle Reasoning, which they always oppose in its own way; not to be ridiculed, not to be treated with severity, but to be tenderly and affectionately exhorted to prepare their Hearts for the reception of the inward witness, and to relume the light of life, which they have extinguished, or rendered faint, through Pride, Vice, or total Neglect.

FACTS have evinced, that theological disputation has little effect in converting the infidel. Infidels have often been remarkable for native sagacity, and richly furnished with human learning, though little acquainted with divine knowledge. I never knew any of them retract their errors, after the publication of the most ingenious and laborious books which claimed the honour of completely refuting them. It is time to try another method, since none can be more unsuccessful than that which has hitherto been used. It is time to trust less in human means, and rely on the power of God,* which will manifest itself in the hearts of all men who persevere with earnestness in seeking divine illumination.

I deem it extremely imprudent and indecent to ridicule the unbeliever. It is setting him an example, which he may follow to the great injury of all that is serious and truly valuable both in morals and religion. It argues a levity and disregard for his happiness, very unbecoming any man who knows the value of a human soul, or who professes a soli-

* "Power among the Jews signified more than a quality: it signified a PERSON." G. RIDLEY.

The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of God and the POWER of the Most Highest.

citude to *save it alive*. Though it cause no conversion, it will produce retaliation.

Still more unchristian is it to treat him with severity.* I have read books professing to recommend the benign religion of Christ, and to refute all objections to it, yet written in the very gall of bitterness, and displaying a pride and malignity of heart which may justly prompt the unbeliever to say, "If your religion, of which you profess to be a believer, and which you describe as teaching charity or benevolence in its fullest extent, can produce no better a specimen than your own temper and disposition, let me preserve my good-nature, and you may keep your Christianity, with all its boasted advantages, in your own exclusive possession."

The late Bishop Warburton treated infidels with a haughty asperity scarcely proper to be shown to thieves and murderers, or any the most abandoned members of society. Many have doubted, from the tenour of his writings, whether he was a believer; or whether he only thought it sufficient, for the sake of rising in the church, to support religion by argument as a state engine. Certain it is, that the Spirit which he shows towards his opponents† is not

* "Any thing that is proud, any thing that is peevish and scornful, any thing that is uncharitable, is against the ὑγιαινουσα διδασκαλια, that sound doctrine of which the apostles speak. *Professio Christiana nil nisi justum suadet et lene.*—The Christian profession teaches nothing but justice and meekness, kindness and charity." Bp. TAYLOR.

† The following is a specimen of the temper with which Bishop Warburton wrote his book on the *Doctrine of Grace*. In the fifth chapter, where he is speaking of the office and operation of the Holy Spirit, he has the following note on Mr. WILLIAM LAW, who, if mistaken, is allowed to have been a sincere Christian, and a very good as well as ingenious man:

"This poor man," (says the great Prelate,) "whether misled

the spirit of Grace; that spirit which is loving, gentle, and easy to be entreated. His polemic spirit is singularly proud and acrimonious; and so has been the spirit of many of his controversial predecessors and successors.

How amiable and gentle, on comparison, the language and sentiments of Voltaire* and Rousseau. Compare them with the mean, narrow, selfish sentiments of a time-serving preferment-hunter, or the political caution and hypocrisy of a sacerdotal courtier. Voltaire and Rousseau would have loved Christianity, and probably believed it, if it had not been distorted and disfigured by the malignant passions of angry defenders of it, who showed their love of Christ by hating their brother, and who appeared by their actions to mean little by their professions, besides the gratification of pride and avarice.

Religion is beautiful. Full of grace are her lips. She shall speak for herself to the hearts of unbelievers, and the busy, thoughtless world:

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy

by his fanaticism or his spleen, has here fallen into a trap which his folly laid for his MALICE."

There is then no malice in this observation, no pride, no revenge.

* "In the writings of Voltaire, who never fails to have a taunting hit at the clergy, the CURÉ is generally an amiable personage, a charitable man, a friend to the poor and unfortunate, a peacemaker, and a man of piety and worth."

ROBISON'S *Proofs of Conspiracy.*

Voltaire saw in the CURÉ (or *parish priest*) real Christianity—in the court clergy of France, hypocrisy, villainy, pride, and cruelty.

Would not the true spirit of Christianity reprobate such men, hiding the foul fiend under the white robes of religion? I bear my testimony, in the strongest terms, against the general tendency of Rousseau's and Voltaire's writings; but think much of their evil is to be attributed to the COURT CLERGY of France.

laden, and I will refresh you. I call you, not for the sake of promoting any worldly interest, not for political purposes, not for an ecclesiastical party, not to maintain the riches or grandeur of any corrupt establishment; but that I may make you happy; that I may dispel the clouds of trouble and doubt which darken your paths, and show you the sunshine of Heaven. Mine is a spirit of love. I am a lover of men. I seek to do you good. I bring the glad tidings of the gospel; that is, I disclose to you that God Almighty, in pity to suffering and erring mortals, sends a COMFORTER, the Holy Ghost, descending like a dove, all peaceable, gentle, lovely. I fill you with hope; and hope is a cheerful passion. I tranquillize your agitated bosoms, and lead you, rejoicing on your way, to the silent grave, whither you must go, whether you make your journey to it cheerful and pleasant, as you may, under my guidance, or dismally dark, as it will ever be, when I withdraw my lustre."

Would not such a mode of address be more likely to conciliate men who reject Christianity, than all the angry taunting language which has been used, not only against professed infidels, but against believers, who disagreed a little in matters of indifference.* South, Bentley, Warburton, and some able writers in recent times, have shown, in their zealous defences, the pride of pedantry, the fierceness of barbarians, the subtlety of Machiavelian politicians, but quite forgot the gentleness which characterises the wisdom from heaven, and which alone can win souls by the charms of soft persuasion, assisted by the holy spirit of love.

* "Holy wars have ever been the worst of wars; and scriptural debates the most intemperate: what is gained in argument is perhaps lost in piety—in charity undoubtedly." GILPIN.

It is said of Dr. Johnson, that he used to declare, he loved a good hater. Many polemical divines have shown themselves capable of this passion of hatred in its highest perfection. But hatred begets hatred; and Dr. Johnson's declaration is among those inconsistencies in his life, which prove a great man still but a man. I am sorry that this saying should be recorded of him; for Dr. Johnson professed himself a zealous Christian, and Christ taught us to love even an enemy. According to the Christian rule, an enemy, instead of being hated, is to be melted to love and kindness by good usage.

The *odium theologicum*, or the rancour of the clergy to each other, when they discuss controversial points of divinity, is, in my opinion, the greatest *opprobrium theologicum*. A blot in the theological character not be wiped off by the officious hand of the most partial apologist.* *Warburtonian* insolence and ill-nature have done more injury to the church, and to the cause of Christianity, than any of the writers whom they were intended to gall and mortify.

* See Warburton's dedication to freethinkers, and many parts of his works: specimens of great levity, bitter invective, gross sarcasm, and total carelessness for the state, both present and final, of those unhappy persons, whom he justly represents as miserably mistaken. Does the good shepherd worry the stray sheep with blood-hounds, or bruise them with his crook? The crosier, or pastoral staff, of Warburton became in his hands a bludgeon or a rod of iron.

SECTION LII.

Of the inadequate Idea entertained by many respectable Persons concerning Christianity; with a Suggestion on the Expediency of their considering the true Nature of Christian Philosophy.

To abstain from gross, enormous, open, and scandalous vices, to comply with the outward ceremonies of the church, and to reciprocate the usual and formal civilities of life, constitutes, in the opinion of multitudes, not only a very respectable member of society, but a very good Christian. Concerning the doctrines of Christianity, such persons give themselves little concern, but plume themselves on decently practising the duties by which they understand nothing more than a very imperfect kind of heathen morality, and the avoidance of such conduct as might expose them to the animadversion of law, or to the loss of reputation. The duties of Christianity thus limited, they think easily discernible, without study or reading, by common observation and common sense. Doing as others do, as far as the decorum of established manners allows and prescribes, is the grand rule. Such persons pass through life with great credit, paying their way, (as it is expressed,) and making themselves agreeable in company, and are seldom mentioned but with the praise of very good sort of people.

Exactly such sort of people they might have been if Christianity had never existed. They hold no opinion, they adopt no practice peculiar to Christianity. The gospel, which they profess to embrace, is a leaden rule, an accommodating guide, an humble companion, that must obsequiously stand on one side,

whenever it is in the way of a fashionable practice. Gaming, duelling, and many modes of gratification inconsistent both with the letter and spirit of the gospel, seem to receive no check from this convenient species of Christianity.

Any thoughts which may occasionally intrude of a very serious kind, are laughed away by the surrounding circle, as vapours, fancies, the effects of morbid melancholy, or of nervous indisposition. Company, public places, public diversions, are immediately proposed as a sovereign remedy; and indeed they certainly are so far a remedy, that they banish serious thoughts, but they also banish that happy disposition, (for happiness is serious,) which might have caused the visitation from on high, and obtained, for the weary and sick heart, the sweetly-refreshing cordial of divine grace.

Attendance at polite places of public worship* seems to constitute the piety of such persons; and public subscription to fashionable or political contributions shows their charity. It seems fair to infer, that their piety and charity are thus circumscribed, because their actions, on other occasions and at other places, seem inconsistent with piety or charity. Sunday is often employed by them in a manner forbidden both by divine and human laws; and the

* "Where hell is not mentioned to ears polite, where the ear is pleased and the heart untouched, which," says Bishop Stillingfleet, "seems to be like stroking the consciences of people with feathers dipt in oil."—"In certain finical sermons of some great pulpit haranguers," says Dr. Edwards, "the name of God is esteemed low and mean. I could quote some of them who avoid that word, as if it were not fine enough for them, but must be exchanged, in all their discourses, for the divine Being, the Almighty, the Author of all Things, the Governor of the World; and so they seldom use the word Christ, but substitute some other title. Some pronounce the word God, *Gad*, and Lord, *Lud*," &c.

Dr. John Edwards.

poor at the next door to their mansions, in some retired village, are often unrelieved, while strangers at a watering place, (where the benefactors' names are handed about,) and advertised objects, receive a very ample share of their public bounty.

All this while they consider themselves as good Christians. God only knows the heart; but if they are mistaken, as is probable, their mistake is a very unhappy one. They are depriving themselves of the benefit of Christianity.

But their mistake probably arises from ignorance. They are indeed very far from ignorant of many things. Their ignorance is chiefly ignorance of religion; and it is caused by habitual inattention to the doctrines of Christianity.* It is indeed rather difficult to avoid such ignorance, since their time is occupied in what religion calls vanity, and the few hours devoted to reading are chiefly employed in novels, where a truly Christian character would be deemed a perfect solecism.

I humbly hope that the contemplation of CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY, thus imperfectly represented in this little volume, may lead them to study it in the great authors whom I have cited; and I trust they will thence find a great increase in their comforts, and that their happiness will be less exposed to concussion, when founded on the solid basis of divine favour.

* "And they said unto him, we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost; and he (St. Paul) said unto them, unto what then were ye baptized?" *Acts*, xix. 2, 3.

SECTION LIII.

On Indifference and Insensibility to Religion, arising from Hardness of Heart. No Progress can be made in CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY *in such a State, as it is a State incompatible with the divine Influence.—The Doctrine of an actual Change, supernaturally produced, in the Heart, vindicated from the Charge of Enthusiasm.*

THE fine feelings with which nature formed the heart of man in his primeval state, and with which perhaps every infant is born, are too often rendered obtuse by indiscriminate commerce with the world; and the *heart of flesh*, once tremblingly alive to the softest touch of sympathy, is metamorphosed to a heart of stone.* Deplorable change! for what is man when he ceases to feel? a reasoning vegetable, with this painful preeminence over the nettles and briars, that he has the power of being actively mischievous in the present state, and capable, when the sensibility shall be restored in another, of final and insufferable woe. To lapse into this condition, to become past feeling, to have a seared conscience, is, without doubt, the heaviest calamity of which human nature is susceptible. Perhaps he who is reduced to it is not conscious of it at the time; a circumstance which, contrary to what might be expected, ultimately aggravates his misfortune. It is characteristic of this state, that while it is alive to

* Σκληροκαρδια.—There is a judicial hardness of heart thus described in the Scriptures:

"For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART, and should be converted, and I should heal them." Acts, xxviii. 27. Isaiah, vi. 9.

the vanities and miseries of the world, it is dead to God and all the delicate sensations of unaffected virtue.

This condition of religious insensibility is not to be accounted for by causes merely physical or philosophical. The middle-aged fall into it as well as the old, the healthy as well as the diseased, men of the brightest talents no less than the dull and the stupid. But Christian Philosophy traces its origin, and pronounces it the consequence of an UNREGENERATE state, or the total defect of divine grace. He who lives in it has forsaken his God, the guide of his youth; and his God has forsaken him, and given him up to a reprobate mind, a heart of stone, at once cold and impenetrable. WHOM HE WILL, HE HARDENETH.*

Happily he, who in his displeasure inflicted the misfortune, can remove it. "A new heart," says God, "will I give you, a new Spirit will I put into you; and I will take away the stony† heart out of

* Romans, ix. 18.

† Our most learned and pious poet Milton alludes to this passage. He was a firm believer in the doctrine of the Spirit's influence on the heart of man, as is evident from several passages, both of his prose and poetry. I quote the following fine lines from his Paradise Lost:

"Thus they in lowliest plight repentant stood
Praying; for from the Mercy Seat above
Prevenient grace descending had removed
The stony from their hearts, and made new flesh
Regenerate grow instead, that sighs now breathed
Unutterable, which the Spirit of prayer
Inspired and winged for Heaven." Book xi. l. 1.

Let us hear him in prose:

"It is a human frailty to err, and no man is infallible here on earth. But so long as all those profess to set the Word of God only before them for the rule of faith and obedience, and use all diligence and sincerity of heart by reading, by learning, by study,

your flesh; and I will give you a heart of flesh, and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them."*

From this declaration mankind may conclude, (as many ever have been and still are experimentally convinced,) that God influences the human bosom by his actual interposition and the supernatural energy of his Holy Spirit. Christ himself says, *Lo! I am with you, even unto the end of the world.*" But how is he with us but by the Holy Ghost, whose ordinary operations are now as energetic as ever on the bosom of the true believer. Except a man be born again of this Spirit, we read in express language, "he cannot see the kingdom of God." No words can be more explicit. They mean regeneration by Grace, or what else do they mean? They support, as on a rock, the doctrine of divine agency; and without this doctrine, all teaching and preaching is "as salt that has lost its savour." This doctrine forms the solid basis of CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY. All morality, every precept and principle which leads to happiness present or future, stand upon it immovably. Other buildings are of hay and stubble; this is of gold and marble.

And with respect to the charge of blamable enthusiasm,† which is constantly brought, and can-

by prayer for the illumination of the Holy Spirit to understand the rule and obey it, they have done what man can do: God will assuredly pardon them."

* Ezekiel, xxxvi. 26, 27.

† It would be blamable enthusiasm to pretend to the gratiæ gratis datæ, as the schoolmen express it, that is, to the χαρισματα, such as the gift of tongues, miracles, signs, wonders, and prophecy; but is not blamable enthusiasm to believe that, what the same schoolmen call gratiæ gratum facientes; that is, the χαριτες, such as joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness,

not be too frequently repelled, let us hear Bishop Lavington, so great an enemy to methodism, that he wrote the severest book which ever appeared in opposition to it. But thus he speaks to his clergy, on a solemn occasion, when he was instructing them how to execute their pastoral office:

"My brethren," says he, "I beg you will rise up with me against MORAL PREACHING. We have long been attempting the reformation of the nation by discourses of this kind. With what success? None at all. On the contrary, we have dexterously preached the people into downright infidelity. We must change our voice. We must preach Christ, and him crucified. Nothing but the GOSPEL is, nothing will be found to be, the power of God unto salvation, besides. Let me therefore again and again request, may I not add, let me charge you, to preach JESUS, and salvation through his name. Preach the Lord who bought us; preach redemption through his blood; preach the saying of the great High Priest; HE WHO BELIEVETH SHALL BE SAVED; preach repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."

Thus Bishop Lavington; a man who abhorred fanaticism. Who could ever suspect Archbishop Secker,* Bishop Hurd, Bishop Horne, Bishop Horsley, of

faith, meekness, temperance, are given or inspired by that Spirit which, in the language of the Liturgy, *God sent to teach the hearts of his faithful people?* If this is blamable enthusiasm, then the Liturgy and the New Testament abound in blamable enthusiasm, and Bishop Warburton and many other bishops should, as honest men, have resigned their mitres, and gone to their farms or merchandise for gain; and not have made a gain of (pretended) godliness.

* "The truth, I fear, is," says Archbishop Secker, "that many, if not most of us, have dwelt too little on these doctrines," (the doctrine of Grace and other peculiar doctrines of Christianity,)

irrational enthusiasm? Yet, in their discourses and charges, they all urge their clergy, not to preach mere moral doctrines, the philosophy of the heathens but the gospel; that is, the great doctrines of redemption, atonement, satisfaction by Christ, and the necessity and importance of divine grace. If, by the coming of Christ, God recommended only a moral system, merely republished the religion of nature, this would in fact have been no revelation. Indeed, a merely moral Christianity is Deism.

When Christianity is the national religion, and great revenues are allotted to its professional teachers, many may choose to join the crowd of Christians for the loaves and fishes; many may call themselves Christians who have nothing of Christianity but the name, and in their hearts despise even the name; but let all serious and sensible men remember, *that if the Gospel is hid, it is hid to them that are lost, whose eyes the god of this world hath blinded;* let them in time beware, lest that come upon them which is spoken by the Prophet: "Behold, ye despisers,

"in our sermons—by no means, in general, from disbelieving or slighting them."

Again, says the same discerning Primate: "We have, in fact, lost many of our people to sectaries, by not preaching in a manner sufficiently evangelical." SECKER'S CHARGES.

There never was a more discreet, rational, or judicious Archbishop than Secker. He could not favour fanaticism, for he was a man who guided his thoughts and actions by the strictest rules of right reason. He was a wise man, even according to this world's notion of wisdom; and his natural constitution, as to devotional feelings, was too cold to produce enthusiasm.

The faint praise, or rather the detraction from the character of Secker, in the Life of Warburton, published by Bishop Hurd, is ably and properly exposed in a pamphlet by Dr. Wintle. Gratitude is amiable, and much must be pardoned even to its excesses; yet it must be blamed, when it proceeds to a violation of truth and justice, to vile sycophantism and servile adulation.

and wonder and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which you will in no wise understand, though a MAN declare it unto you."*

SECTION LIV.

A Self-Examination recommended respecting religious Insensibility.

I ADVISE my reader, without a moment's delay, to take a view of the present state of his heart. Let us lay aside books awhile, and consider our own bosoms, without self-flattery, and uninterrupted either by business or pleasure.

Does my heart require renovation? Is it piously inclined to God, and kindly to my fellow-creature? Am I convinced of my own ignorance, weakness, and unworthiness? Have I inquired into the health of my soul, the state of my temper and disposition, with half the solicitude with which I take care to feed, to cure, to adorn my body? If not, I may call myself a Christian, and join the congregation of Christians, but I am probably still a heathen, still unregenerate. I may be in the gall of bitterness, and the bond of iniquity. My heart may be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, and as I value my happiness in this short state of existence, or my immortal soul, I must seek the divine Grace, to give me a lively sense of my wants and wretchedness, and of God's power and will to illuminate and comfort me by his Holy Spirit.

But, supposing that I am feelingly convinced of sin and misery, and sincerely wish to be delivered from it, do I seek deliverance by the gospel means, that is, through Jesus Christ; or do I depend upon

* Acts, xiii. 40, 41.

my own reason, a few moral acts and habits observed for the sake of decency, for my own health, wealth, and that reputation in the world which is necessary to the advancement of my interest? If so, my morality is worldly wisdom, and my religion has no claim to Christianity. I am unregenerate, unconverted, unrenewed, notwithstanding my baptism and my professions; and continuing as I do by choice a heathen, in the midst of the light of Christianity, which at the same time I solemnly profess* to admire and adopt, I must finally perish, after an unsatisfactory life.

Is my Christianity a cold, philosophical assent to a few propositions in the gospel, evident before the gospel was divulged, and such as I select from others of the same authority in the same book, which I do not so well approve? Then is my religion nominal only. I profess to believe, as others appear to do, what I never in my life fully considered. I am content to live without God in the world, so long as my corn and my wine increase, and I can say to my soul, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry."† For the sake of living at peace, and for the sake of credit, which is intimately connected with my interest, I conform to all outward ceremonies and all moral decencies; but my heart has not yet been truly turned to God. I know no other God than my own gain and pleasure; and as to heaven, this earth, so long as I secure to myself a large share of it and its good things, is my

* "Every other confession of the reasonableness and excellency of the Christian religion, but that which the correction of sin and misery in the soul makes of it, is but like the praise of a bystander, who commends something in which he has no concern." LAW.

† Luke, xii. 19.

paradise. I say to myself, "It is good for me to be here; here will I build my tabernacle; for it is a pleasant place, and I have a delight therein." But what shall I say when this world is receding from me, when my senses decay, and death evidently approaches? Then shall I have no comfort, unless God should soften my heart by the effusion of his Spirit. But lest my obduracy should grow impenetrable by time, I will immediately implore the divine favour, in cooperation with my own endeavours, to restore my religious sensibility. I will henceforth cultivate the love of God. I will acquaint myself with him, and be at peace.

But to love God only, is not enough. Do I love my fellow-creature? or, as it is expressed in Scripture, "my neighbour?" The Apostle says, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God; he that loveth not, knoweth not God, and therefore cannot be born of him, for God is love."* How, then, is my heart affected towards my fellow-creatures? Are my friendships merely combinations for the sake of interest and pleasure? Is there any human being in the world whom I wish to be miserable, and would render so, if I had him in my power? Have I no sympathetic feelings for men as men? If I cannot recollect acts of disinterested beneficence, I may rest assured that the same hardness of heart which renders me insensible to God, has also made me a stranger to the social affections. I have need, therefore, to pray that God would thaw my heart by the sunshine of his grace. He who can turn a *heart of stone into a heart of flesh*,† will cause me to feel, by his Spirit's influence, for those who share with me the evils incident to humanity.

* 1 John, iv. 7, 8. † Ezekiel, xxxvi. 26.

By such questions as the above, and many such every man may propose to himself, the state of the heart may be ascertained much better than by signing articles or repeating a symbol.

God certainly made the heart of man tender. Jesus himself wept, and thus for ever hallowed the briny fountain. Tears are appropriated to man, as one of the most honourable distinctions which separate him from the brute creation. When man has dried up the sacred source by acquired insensibility, he has degraded his nature, and must have recourse to God to make him a new creature, to regenerate and render him alive to the sentiments of divine love, and the soft touches of humane sympathy. God's Spirit can break the rock of flint asunder, and cause the waters to gush from it in abundance.

And can I venture to hope that he will do so, that he will melt my obduracy? Yes, certainly; for Jesus Christ has promised the influence of his Spirit to renew the heart, and accomplish the great work of regeneration. Without this I cannot be happy. I may be rich, learned, powerful, but I cannot be happy. I am lost and undone without it; in a state more degraded and wretched than that of the lowest and obscurest human being, whose piety and humility may have drawn down upon his heart the holy emanation of divine love.

SECTION LV.

The Sum and Substance of Christian Philosophy the Renewal of the Heart, *by Divine Grace; or the softening it and rendering it susceptible of virtuous and benevolent impressions, by cultivating the two grand Principles—Piety to God, and Charity to Man.*

WHAT is Christian wisdom or philosophy? Let the Apostle answer; it is to "put off the old man, which is corrupt, and to put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness." We must be born again, or it had been better for us that we had not been born at all. The wisdom from above is the true Christian Philosophy; that wisdom which, we are told, "is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."*

Hardness of heart, we have seen, is incompatible with this wisdom which is full of mercy. The bosom must be softened by divine influence. Redeem the time, therefore, that you have hitherto lost in a cold, lifeless, formal, metaphysical, and decorous religion. Love God, love your neighbour, with the ardour of a sincere mind, and the amiable simplicity of infantine innocence. Seek Jesus Christ with the earnestness of one who is a Christian by choice, and not merely because he was born in a Christian country, or of Christian parents; not because the laws of the land have established that religion, and it is creditable to appear among its professors in places consecrated to public devotion. Be Christians on your pillows, in your daily employments, in the occupation of your merchandise or agriculture, as well as in your church,

* James, iii. 17.

and on the day set apart for divine service. Let Christ,* by the Holy Ghost, be formed in your hearts, restoring in you the image of God, in which you were created, but which was sadly sullied, or quite defaced, by the fall of the first Adam, and can be restored only by the mercy of the second.

If there were but a probability that these comfortable doctrines are true, a wise man would cherish them; but as they are abundantly confirmed by the written word, by the church, by the learned, by the experience and testimony of millions of pious men; who would not resolve to believe, and if any doubts should at any time arise, to say, "Lord, help thou my unbelief?"

Religion has been, and is, the delight of a great part of our fellow-creatures throughout Christendom. It may be ours, if we will but duly apply our minds to it. Consider with what ardour of attachment many seek pictures, books, the works of art, the objects of taste and fancy. They learn to love them, by applying their minds to them. Half the application bestowed on things, which, at best, are but toys, would, if bestowed on religion, make it your chief delight, the guardian of your youth, and the comfort of your age and affliction. You would no longer consider its duties and employments as heavy and dull. You would feel, not only the offices of charity, but devotion, sweet to your soul. The gracious words of gospel truth, of prayer, and thanksgiving, would, "come o'er thine ear," as the poet says,

> "——— like the sweet south
> That breathes upon a bank of violets."

It is justly said, that in devotional offices, passion

* God is in Christ; in Christ dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; God is in Christ; Christ is IMMANUEL, God with us. Col. ii. 9. 2 Cor. v. 19. Isaiah, vii. 14. Matt. i. 23.

becomes reason, and transport, temper. Heaven must disdain the cold prayer, the lukewarm praise of insensibility and indifference. The incense must blaze on the altar, before the sweet odours can ascend to the skies. Cold devotion is indevout. Heartless thanksgiving is an insult. What! shall we be warm, and anxious, and sanguine, in worldly pursuits, in politics and party, and dull and languid as followers of Christ, in showing our zeal in the cause of the great Captain of our salvation, which is the cause of all mankind, a cause in which heaven and earth are interested?

Be it the great endeavour of all who would obtain wisdom from above, to conciliate, by fervent prayer, the grace of God, which will remove all hardness of heart, the cause of that coldness and insensibility, which is too often most unjustly honoured with the name of moderation.*

SECTION LVI.

On spiritual Slumber, as described in the Scriptures, and the Necessity of being awakened.

THE religious world is divided into many sects; but perhaps the most numerous party consists of nominal Christians, who, tacitly professing Christianity, appear to adopt no religious opinions at all; who, indeed, neither deny the truth of any religion, nor controvert its doctrines; but who give themselves up to the pleasure and business of the world, or to mere thoughtlessness and inactivity, and leave religion to its ordained ministers, to their neighbours, to the

* "Because thou art lukewarm, I will vomit thee out of my mouth"—εμεσαι—one of the strongest expressions of contempt and indignation in the holy Scriptures. REV. iii. 16.

weak, the sick, and the superannuated. In the words of Isaiah, "They hear, but understand not; and see, indeed, but perceive not; the heart of this people is fat, their ears heavy, and their eyes shut." With respect to their spiritual state, they may be said to have fallen into a deep sleep; and in the midst of their bodily activity, their souls, as far as religion is concerned, are sunk in slumber. To these the animating words of the Apostle are addressed: "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

Is it possible (it might be asked) that men can sleep so soundly, in this uncertain state, while the house they inhabit may be said to be in flames, or while they lie on the very brink of a steep cliff, from which, if they fall, they fall to rise no more? It is not only possible, but common; though it is a sleep, in which, whosoever indulges, may possibly sleep on till he wake no more. It may be a fatal sleep; the sleep of death; the stupor of a lethargy; the numbness of a spiritual palsy; the insensibility of mortification.

They who fall into this deep sleep, like those who indulge the sleep of nature, commonly lie in darkness; the darkness of voluntary ignorance. During their repose, indolence smooths their pillow, and silences their pavilion. Their eyes are closed by prejudice, and the curtains drawn around them by pride and presumption. The opiates of vanity, of worldly ease and pleasure, superinduce a kind of trance. Sealed are their eye-lids, but their sleep is not a quiet sleep; it is not sweet and refreshing, like the sleep of virtue, the balmy repose of health, wearied, at the close of day, with the exertions of beneficence.

Theirs is a sleep interrupted by dreams. Shadowy, fantastic forms, of a thousand shapes and hues, flit

before their fancy. Ambition has her dreams, Avarice her spectres, and Pleasure her visions of ideal bliss, painted with a glow of colouring, which the pencil cannot emulate.

Crowns and sceptres, purple robes, lawn sleeves, crimson banners, with titles of honour, and armorial bearings, pass, like a pageant, before the courtier, the statesman, the senator, the lawyer, the warrior, and the worldly-minded priest. Each fixes his eye upon them devoutly. He catches at them eagerly, as the glittering train moves on. They elude his grasp. He catches again. The air-drawn baubles vanish. Again he is disappointed. Still he perseveres; and with aching heart, and trembling knees, and palsied hand, he reaches, at last, perhaps, with great difficulty, a coronet, a mitre, a star, a riband, and places it on his shaking head, or his throbbing bosom;—then, stumbling on the dark mountains, down he falls, stripped of all his blushing honours and his gorgeous robes. Clad in a shroud, and with a few vain words engraved on his coffin-plate, his body is thrust, lest he should become noisome, into a mouldy vault, to rot and be forgotten here, where alone he sought distinction; and to appear divested of all its gaudy ornaments before Christ, his judge; of whom he never once thought seriously, during the deep sleep and the long day-dreams of a vain, and irreligious life.

Behold another dreamer, with a hoary head, lying down to rest, not on soft pillows, but on bags of gold.* It is the miser; he dreams that the pale spectre of haggard poverty is pursuing hard after him; a cold sweat bedews his emaciated cheeks, and his teeth shake; but he is cheered again by dreaming of bargains, usurious contracts, of joining house to

* "——*Congestis undique saccis*
Indormit——." HOR.

house, and laying field to field; of saving all he gains, of taking advantage of the wants of one, and the ignorance of another, to fill his enormous chest. And lo! it is now full. Is he happy? and does he use it? Does he enjoy it for the purposes it was designed? Does he think of God, the giver of all good things? Does he distribute it to the poor? No; his joy consists in telling it over and over, weighing it with shaking hands, and viewing it with a dim spectacled eye, which can scarcely distinguish a counterfeit from a true coin. At some future period, when he shall have completed a certain sum, he dreams that he shall build, plant, do good, and be whatever a man ought to be. But the sleep of death comes on before the dream of life is over, and he is gone. And now his heir thrusts him into the ground, with a face of affected grief, that can hardly hide his real joy. Down sinks the dreaming dotard, into the bosom of that earth* to which his mind was prone; his very name rots with his emaciated body; and his spirit, now poor indeed, moans and bewails that he laid up no treasure in Heaven; and that, in his earthly visions, he never thought of his soul; never felt a desire for the riches of grace.

And now behold his heir. Possessed of wealth which he never knew the toil of earning, he becomes a man of pleasure; and he also dreameth a dream. The banquet is prepared. The wine giveth its colour in the cup. The gaming-table is before him. Noise and riot drive away thought and care. The singing men and the singing women enter. Money is lavished on horses, dogs, sharpers, buffoons; and no debts regarded but those of false honour. His heart dances to the melody of the harp and the viol; he pampers every bodily sense, till pleasure itself is converted

* "*O pronæ in terras animæ, et cælestium inanes!*" PERS.

into pain or insensibility. He dreams on, and soon sees phantoms of pleasure, the ghosts of departed joys, dancing, in mockery, before his eyes. His powers of perception decay, his youth and health are departed, and he droops like a hyacinth, broken down by a hasty shower, before it has expanded its beauty. Down he sinks to the earth, into an untimely grave; and mourns, as he retires from the shadowy scene, that a greediness of pleasure surfeited his senses, and robbed him, not only of longer life, but of real enjoyment during its continuance. What preparation did he make to relish the pleasures which flow at God's right hand; the pleasures of reason, the sweets of benevolence, all-pure, all-spiritual, no less exquisite in the enjoyment, than exalted and durable in their nature? Alas! none. He had neither time nor inclination. His soul slept, while his body waked with a fever. The fine sensibilities of the spiritual nature were enveloped in slumber, while his bodily senses were unnaturally jaded, and prematurely worn out by constant vigilance and activity. He drank the cup of pleasure to the dregs, and the dregs were to his palate wormwood, and to his vitals poison.

Similar to such slumbers and such dreams are the slumbers and the dreams of many who are met walking in their sleep in the streets of the city; who are seen all lively and active in the gaily-illuminated theatres of pleasure, in the crowded emporiums of commerce,* in the courts of princes, in the senate-house, in the forum, and at the tribunal. Deeply do they drink the draughts of worldly vanity, which, like doses of opium, lay them indeed asleep; but at the same time fill them with self-conceit and

* "*Virorum nugæ, negotia vocantur.*"—The toys of full-grown men are called *business.* AUGUSTIN. *Confess.* i. 9.

pride, and disturb them with dreams, wild as the scenes of fairy land. Theirs is not a sweet sleep; it is the sleep of disease, and resembles what the physicians call the COMA VIGIL, a waking slumber, a dangerous symptom. Then let no man indulge the first tendencies to the sleep of the soul; but rather shake off sloth, and hear the voice which calls him like the cheerful herald of the morning: "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Cheerful, pleasant, merciful warning! But many, it is feared, are too fast asleep to hear it. Like the swallows in the winter, they lie in a torpid state; but even the swallows, when the spring calls them forth, rise from their temporary death, (if such it may be called,) to soar with joy and triumph in the gay fields of æther. The primroses and violets sleep on their banks for many months; but when the bland voice of the zephyrs whisper "arise," they spring forth, lift up their heads, and drink the sun-beams, and the dew of heaven. And shall the cold ear of man be for ever deaf to the still small voice of conscience; and shall his eyes be impenetrable to the beams of grace? Many seem to have little in their nature of a religious disposition; yet let us not conclude that any of the sons of Adam, any of the redeemed of Christ, are destitute of that living principle, which is to be fostered and cherished even to immortal life. There is in every man a spark, perhaps a latent spark, which only requires to be gently blown by the aspiration of the Holy Ghost, to become a clear light, and afford a vital warmth, to guide to all evangelical truth, and to invigorate the mind with faith and hope. There is in every man a seed of virtue, goodness, and piety, which only requires the divine grace to shine upon it, in order to become a flourishing plant,

exuberant in its foliage, beautiful in its blossom, abundant in its delicious fruit, striking root deeply in the heart, reaching the heavens with its branches, and vegetating in beautiful verdure to all eternity.

To excite this spark, to cherish this little tender seed of grace, this, O sons of men, is the work, this the labour. Arise, therefore, and be doing, and the Lord be with you.

Let all men take an impartial view of their own state, and examine whether they are not in the state of spiritual sleeping and dreaming already described. How passes our life? We eat, we drink, we sleep. To-morrow and to-morrow the same dull repetition: we eat, we drink, we sleep. So also do the poor animals around us, whom we look down upon as our inferiors. How are we employed in the intervals of this animal, or rather vegetative life? We buy, we sell, we dress, we trifle, we visit, we tell or hear the tale of the day, often a trifling, often a false, sometimes a malevolent one; but in all this, have little other design than to pass away the time without reflection; to forget ourselves; to hide the prospect before us—death, judgment, heaven, and hell!

How stands the real state of that religion which we profess? We learned our catechism in our infancy; we read the bible at school; we go to church like others; we hear and repeat our prayers; but have we, indeed, considered our religion as our principal concern? Christianity is either true or not true. If we believe it true, it must be our chief concern; if not true, then why mock we both God and man by our hypocrisy? But we profess to believe it true. Have we then the symptoms of sincere belief? Have we any secret exercises of the soul in converse and communion with God? Do we spend any time with our own hearts? Have we no sweet

intercourse with Heaven in solitude? no fervour of piety, no inward religion, no spiritual sensibility, no pious ardour, no secret store of comfort unknown to the world, and which the world cannot reach, locked up, as a precious jewel, in the casket of the heart? If we have not, we have reason to suspect that our belief is insincere, we are assuredly in that state which requires us to listen to the animating call, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead;" for dead we are to God; dead to every thing but that vanity which ever terminates in vexation; dead to all those remains of excellence, which have preserved, amidst the ruins of human nature, some faint vestige of its original grandeur and grace.

Take away the spiritual life, and you level man with the brutes. He becomes immediately what the philosophers of old called him, an animal with two legs and without feathers. How are the mighty fallen! The wings of the eagle are clipped. He no longer eyes the golden sun, but grovels, like a reptile, on the earth. You not only level him with the brutes. You make him more miserable than they; for he is sorely sensible of his evils, which they are not; he is sensible of his forlorn condition, sensible of the shortness and possible evils of life, suffers imaginary as well as real woe, and sees the gloomy prospect before him—the grave opening to swallow him up, and the possibility of something terrible beyond it. If we are but animals, then are we of all animals most miserable! Our very perfections are our bane.

Since a religious lethargy is thus degrading to our nature, let us rescue ourselves from it to-day, while it is called to-day; and let no man say with the sluggard, "a little more sleep, and a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep." Life ebbs apace. The day is far spent to many of

us. The night is at hand, when the sad licence may be allowed to us in that severe permission, "Sleep on, now, and take your rest." Your sun is set to rise no more. Death's scythed triumphal car drives on rapidly, and mows down all that stand in the way. It is computed, by the ingenious in calculation, that, on the surface of the globe, more than fifty thousand men, women, and children, die every night. How soon may any one of us make an unit in the thousands that every hour go down into the pit, and are no more seen!

One of the best means of shaking off slumber and raising the soul from the sleep of death, is a due preparation for the sacrament of the Lord's supper. Let us never fail to receive it at Christmas, Whitsuntide, and Easter, if we should be so negligent as to omit it at other times.* We shall thus experience a resurrection from the sleep and death of indifference, to life and hope in Christ our Redeemer.

It is, indeed, an alarming symptom of a spiritual slumber, that many go on from year to year, without once receiving the sacrament; without seeking that mysterious communion between God and the human soul; without feeling any need of it; without desiring it; without any hunger or thrist after it. If men were not wrapt in a deep sleep, or state of stupidity, they would long for it; feel an appetite for the heavenly manna; and come to the Lord's table, as to their daily meals, with thirst and hunger.

What shall we think of those numerous professed Christians who, from month to month, during many

* I am cautious of recommending a weekly, or even monthly, reception of the sacrament to the multitude of all ages, knowing the tendency of familiarity to divest the mind of due reverence, and that awe which is salutary. The well-disposed, it is hoped, will require no exhortation to frequent communion.

years, hear notice given of the sacrament to be administered, and pay it not the least attention? who think it a matter which may concern any body but themselves? How many among the poor never think of approaching the altar; live and die, without having once received the sacrament, or sought any other means of grace? Do they think the rich only are capable of grace; that the rich only have souls to save; that our Lord, like the world, invites the rich only to his table? Think, did I say? Alas! they think little on the subject. They are in a deep sleep; lost in the night of ignorance. And it unfortunately happens, that if they are awakened at all, it is usually by the call of some enthusiast, improperly called a methodist,* who leads them from the chilness of indifference, to the burning fever of fanatical devotion. Let them rather hear the evangelical call, and apply it to themselves without delay; "Awake, thou that sleepest:" and let them obey the friendly voice of him who came expressly to preach the gospel to the poor. Let them prepare themselves immediately to use the means of grace afforded them by the sacrament of the Lord's supper, and be thankful that at that table there are no invidious distinctions; that the rich and poor meet together, prostrate on their knees before their Maker, partaking his bounty without partiality, and supplicating his mercy; all equally poor and helpless, without the support and riches of his grace.

There are, it seems probable, many others, who think themselves too young to be at all concerned with things so serious as the sacrament. They go, indeed, to church, but never think of the holy communion, because they are too young to be serious.

* Methodism is described as "godliness without order," *i. e.* without method.

Permit me to ask, what is the precise age at which the care of the soul is to commence? When does the minority of the soul terminate? If all are exempt who are young, and who think themselves young, how great will be the number! Is not going to church a serious thing? They do not think themselves too young to go to church. May it not then be suspected, that as they think themselves unconcerned with the sacrament, they may also think themselves unconcerned with the prayers and the discourses of the church; and so may frequent the church, merely to display their external garb, to gaze and to be gazed at, to pass away an idle hour, and to comply from worldly motives, with an established custom? But if there be truth in Christianity, they are trifling with the most important matters, in a most dangerous manner. They are acquiring a habit of considering the most sacred things with indifference. If they are too young to think of serious things, they certainly are not too young to die. Let them take a walk in the church-yard, and read the inscriptions on the tomb-stones. They will find, perhaps, as many young as old, among the victims of death; and they must allow that youth is a more dangerous season, with respect to temptations, if not diseases, than any other; and consequently, that it more particularly requires the succours of divine grace, to keep it from falling into sin and misery. And what so powerful a means of grace as the sacrament, after a due preparation?

None indeed are too young to receive the divine blessings of grace. Every human being at every age should be sensible how much he wants it; how wretched and how profligate he may become; into what shameful and dreadful conduct he may fall, without it. Awake, therefore, we may properly say

to the youngest among us, awake from a sleep, which you cannot indulge without losing the morning of life; the best season for every kind of work, spiritual as well as worldly. Begin well, in order to end well. Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, and he will not forget you in the days of your old age. Trust not in beauty. Trust not in strength. Beauty alone has no charms in the eye of Heaven. Strength of body cannot avail against the arm of offended Omnipotence. But beauty and strength, combined with virtue and piety—how lovely in the sight of men !* how pleasing to Heaven—peculiarly pleasing, because, with every temptation to deviate, they voluntarily walk in the path of duty.

There is another class yet, with whom I shall expostulate on the propriety of receiving the sacrament, (as a means of exciting them from sleep,) which they are but too apt to neglect, apparently from an idea that they have no concern in it. They claim to be lookers on, like spectators at a contest for life and death, without any interest in the event, I mean the numerous persons who fill the very useful and creditable station of servants and dependants, apprentices, and labourers for hire. These are apt to consider Sunday merely as a holiday, or rather vacation from labour; a day, in which they are to adorn themselves above their rank and station, and to sacrifice to the idols of false pleasure and expensive vanity. To think of the sacrament, or any other serious, affecting duty, on a day devoted to feasting, to jollity, and to wandering from house to house, would throw a gloom upon it, inconsistent with their schemes of enjoyment. Thoughtlessness and folly too often mark their conduct on that day, more than on any day in the week; a day intended for their

* "*Gratior et pulchro veniens in corpore virtus.*" VIRG.

improvement in all virtue, honesty, and true wisdom. Let them ask themselves whether they have not souls, as well as their superiors in rank? Is not our God their God? Did not Christ die for them, as well as for their masters or employers? Let them think of these things, not suffer the sabbath-day, intended to promote their salvation, contribute, more than any other day, to their destruction. Would they have it a day of pleasure? So would we their superiors in civil rank; but in order to be such, it must be a day of innocence, a day of devotion, a day of rational, sober, and discreet recreation.

Let not the sprightliest age imagine that religion will destroy its cheerfulness. No; it will promote it. Nothing gives so fine spirits as a clear conscience; a bosom that feels the satisfaction of having discharged its duties to God and man. Then recreation and harmless pleasure are truly delightful. The sweet, in such circumstances, is without bitter; the rose without a thorn; the honey without a sting. I have ever recommended a cheerful religion; because all religion was certainly intended to make men happy; and because gloominess, moroseness, and severity, which some persons require, without discrimination, in all religious offices, originate in weakness and error, and lead to folly, misery, and madness; to all that is despicable or deplorable. As religion is the comfort; so superstition, fanaticism, and consequent dejection of mind, are the bane and curse of human nature. Let us ever beware of EXCESS, even in good and laudable pursuits; for wisdom, and virtue, and happiness, all dwell with the golden mediocrity. Our professional, or paternal exhortations to religion must indeed be warm and animated; because the greater part of men err, rather in not reaching the desirable point, than by

going beyond it. Yet cautions are also necessary, lest the willing, the zealous, the tender-hearted, should be urged, by their own ardour and by persuasion, to dangerous and unhappy extremes, to melancholy and despair.

It appears I think, from what has been already said, that the lively and animating summons contained in the words, "AWAKE THOU THAT SLEEPEST," is necessary to a great part of mankind, whose feelings are become callous; and who (to repeat the emphatic words of Scripture) have a heart of stone, instead of a heart of flesh; necessary to many, who are, upon the whole, commendable for the general decency and propriety of their conduct in the world, as the world is now circumstanced. Even good kind of people, as they are called, and appear to men, are often not sufficiently awakened to the calls of religious duty. They acquiesce in decencies, decorums, plausibilities, and the cold formal morality which may be practised on the most selfish motives, for worldly interest, for health, and for pleasure. They are not sufficiently sensible of the gospel truths, its great promises, and its dreadful denunciations of vengeance. They are virtuous heathens: followers of the religion of nature, not that of Christ. The world approves them, and therefore they approve themselves; but can the world save them? Can they save themselves? No; assuredly, if Christianity be not a fable, they must come to Christ only, for salvation.

Persons who live in pleasure, that is, who make vain and sensual pleasure the sole business of their lives, are expressly said, in Scripture, to be dead while they live. They appear with smiles of perpetual gaiety; are often furnished with riches and honours; but yet, in the scripture sense, they are

dead, if they are not alive to Christ. What avail worldly possessions and ornaments to a spirit dead in trespasses and sins? The soul, in its best state, takes no real delight in them, because it naturally aspires to higher things. So have I seen a nosegay of tulips, and pinks, and roses, put into the cold hand of a corpse in a coffin, though the poor image of what once was man, could neither see the gaudy tints, nor smell the fragrance.

Shall we then not cry aloud, as we are commanded, in the hope of awakening such unthinking persons to a sense of their own miserable condition, and the hopes afforded by the gospel? Happy for ourselves and our fellow-creatures, if we could address a slumbering world with the trump of an archangel, uttering these enlivening words, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead; and Christ shall give thee light."

All persons whatever, however decent and moral, that are in an unregenerated state, are represented, in the strong metaphorical language of Scripture, as dead; but happily it is a death from which we may raise ourselves by prayer; and returning life will be cherished by heavenly influence.

For what says the friendly call? "Christ shall give thee light." The Sun of righteousness shall shine into the dark chambers of thy bosom, dispel the shades of ignorance, and disperse the phantoms of folly and vanity that sported in the sunless region. Think, poor darkling mortal, what is promised thee! "Christ shall give thee light." As the sun in the morning breaks into thy chamber windows, and thou arisest from thy bed to feel his genial beams, and see all nature reassuming her beautiful colours; so the light of Christ, the light of grace, shall beam upon the soul, by the operation of the Holy Ghost,

and thou shalt arise, and see the truth as it is in Jesus —see the beauty of holiness—the day-spring from on high—feel new vital warmth glowing in thy bosom; and "*though you have lien among the pots,*"* (in the mire and rubbish of worldly vanity,) "yet shall you be as a dove, which hath silver wings, and her feathers like gold."

After living the few days of our pilgrimage thus awake to God, awake to Christ, awake to the blessed influences of the Holy Ghost, your body, indeed, shall lie down, and pay that debt to nature which we must all pay; yet your soul shall separate from it (though not without a pang,) FULL OF HOPE. Old age, or disease, or accidents, will indeed bring your poor, frail, perishing flesh (for such is that of the strongest, the youngest, the most beautiful of us all) to the grave; your bones must lie down in the dust, from which they were taken, and the mourners shall go about the streets; but let them not mourn without hope. Thy flesh shall rest in hope; peaceful shalt thou sleep till the morning of the resurrection; when the trumpet shall sound, and a voice shall be heard, sweeter than the sweetest music to the reviving ear: "Awake! awake! thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and I will give thee light, life, glory, and immortality. Sleep no more!—Arise, put on thy beautiful garments!—My glory is rising upon thee. Go—blessed spirit,—and, in the vesture of a new and glorified body, shine among the spirits of just men made perfect—thyself a spirit, an immortal spirit. Sleep no more in the arms of death; for death is subdued; and, as, like a faithful soldier, you watched with me in the militant state, you shall now join me in the triumphal. Sleep no more the sleep of death; but rise, and exult in light ineffable!"

* Psalm lxviii. 13.

SECTION LVII.

On the PEACE OF GOD, *that calm and composed State which is produced by the* CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY, *and is unknown to the Epicurean, Stoic, and all other Philosophy, ancient and modern.*

A GENERAL prospect of human life presents a scene of turbulence, of which the troubled ocean is an emblem. But there is a sweet, a peaceable, a tranquil state of self-possession, whether external circumstances are prosperous or adverse, which constitutes the most solid happiness of which human nature is capable. This enjoyment, arising from moderate desires, a regulated imagination, lively hopes, and full confidence in the Deity, is that chief good, which philosophers have vainly sought in the schools, by the strongest efforts of unassisted reason. What then can point it out, if reason, improved by science to the highest degree, has not been able to find it? The answer is obvious. The religion of Jesus Christ offers to its sincere votaries the peace of God, which passeth all understanding; a kind and degree of happiness, which no language can clearly express; which the understanding cannot adequately conceive, though the heart can feel it with the most delightful experience.

"The peace of God," (says the world,) "what is it?" They know it not. Many have no conception of happiness, independent of external circumstances; the toys of childhood, protracted to age. They do not search for it in themselves, but in the eyes of the world. All their enjoyments must be violent, sensual, or, at least, ostentatious. Admire them, talk of them, flatter them; let the diurnal papers

exhibit their names in capitals, and fashion crowd to their doors; let their equipages be splendid, and their mansions magnificent, their egress and regress recorded in the daily histories, or they sicken in the midst of health; they pine in the midst of abundance; the rose on their bosom loses its fragrance; the honey on their palates its flavour. To be celebrated, even for folly, even for vice, is to them an enviable notoriety; to be unnoticed in public circles, in the midst of every real blessing and solid comfort at home, infuses a bitter into all those sweets which God in his bounty has lavished.

But the felicity arising from the PEACE OF GOD is neither the tumultuous ecstasy of the fanatic, nor the noisy merriment of the prodigal. It seeks no plaudits; it makes no parade. It blazes not out like the sudden eruptions of a volcano; but burns like the vestal fire, clear and constant, with a warmth that invigorates, without scorching; with a light that illuminates, without dazzling the visual faculty.

Thus desirable, how is the peace of God to be obtained? It is an important question. Let us enter on the research. If we enter on it with dispositions truly humble and sincere, there is little doubt but we shall experience the truth of that comfortable declaration: "Ask, and it shall be given; seek, and ye shall find."

What said the wisdom of pagan antiquity, on the means of securing peace or tranquillity? Much that was plausible; little to the purpose.

It was the advice of an ancient philosopher: "Subject yourself to reason, and you shall be reduced to no other subjection." Experience, however, has evinced, that human reason, under a variety of circumstances, is too weak and fallible to

be depended upon, for the full security of human happiness. What he vainly attributed to reason, may with justice be ascribed to religion. Religion, duly understood, and duly attended to, is capable of giving much of that freedom from passion and perturbation, to which philosophy in vain pretended. Not that I mean to arrogate too much, or claim more than truth and experience will allow, even in favour of religion. While man preserves the nature which God gave him, he must continue subject to the transient impulse of those sensations from external objects which excite passion, and disturb repose.

All I contend for is, that religion, vital religion, the religion of the heart, is the most powerful auxiliary of reason, in waging war with the passions, and promoting that sweet composure which constitutes the peace of God. Reason may point out what is right, but she wants authority in the minds of most men, to enforce obedience to her commands. Here religion steps in with majestic mien, and gives the sanction of a law to the dictates of discretion.

I recommend, therefore, to him who wishes to obtain the peace of God, a diffidence in human reason, however strong by nature, and however improved by study. A confidence in it leads to that pride which God resisteth. But I mean this diffidence to be chiefly confined to the operations of reason in religious disquisitions. Things above reason are not to be rejected as contrary to reason, but to be received with a reverential awe, and a devout submission of the understanding to the God who gave it.

He, then, who wishes to tranquillize his bosom, must have recourse to more powerful medicines than those of an empirical philosophy. Philosophy has been tried, from the earliest ages to the present

hour, with little success. Philosophy is cold and inactive. She may influence and direct the understanding; but she cannot warm the affections with the love of God and virtue. Sentiment is necessary to impel the heart, to guide or regulate even the virtuous passions; and no sentiment is so efficacious for this purpose as the devotional. *The word of God,* as the strong language of Scripture expresses it, *is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow; and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

From the shallow streams of philosophy, we must hasten to the living fountain of the Christian religion. It is the influence of God on the heart of man, the divine operation of the Holy Spirit on the spirit of human creatures, which alone can bestow a permanent tranquillity; that peace of God, which passeth all understanding; that peace which no human eloquence can clearly explain; which no human sagacity can, by its own unassisted efforts, procure; but which the devout heart of the believer feels with joy and gratitude.

This is the polar influence which can alone fix the tremulous needle, and point it directly to Heaven; streaming into the heart of man an emanation of divinity.

Let us then take a view of the fruits of the Spirit, as they are beautifully described by the Apostle. *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.*—These lovely virtues have a natural tendency to produce equanimity, self-possession, a serene, placid, delightful frame of mind, such as the sages of old conceived, indeed, but could not

either procure or communicate. These make a heaven on earth, and render it evident, beyond a doubt, that the true Christian, after all the boasts of the gay voluptuary, is the real MAN OF PLEASURE.

The worldly man of pleasure is indeed, for the most part, a man of pleasure only in name. His pains, upon the whole, greatly outweigh his pleasures; or his insensibility, contracted by excess, leaves him in the midst of all that luxury can spread before him, in a state very remote from the enjoyments of the temperate, humble, and sincere believer.

It would not be right to describe things in a declamatory and rhetorical manner, so as to violate the truth of representation, for the sake of maintaining even the cause of religion. But experience will justify me in asserting, that the numerous tribes in the gay and elevated circles, who pursue happiness in dissipation only, and never think of God, but to swear with levity by his name, exhibit many external signs of singular irritation, and peculiar misery. They appear to have no resources in their own bosom. They depend on precarious externals, on the will and cooperation of others, for all their pleasures. Change of place is their grand remedy for their uneasy sensations.* Like a sick man, who

* Lucretius well describes this restlessness:

" Quid sibi quisque velit nescire et quærere semper,
Commutare locum, quasi onus deponere possit.
Exit sæpe foras magnis ex ædibus ille,
Esse domi quem pertæsum est, subitoque revertit;
Quippe foris nihilo melius qui sentiat esse.
Currit agens mannos ad villam, *hic* præcipitanter
Auxilium tectis quasi ferre ardentibus instans:
Oscitat extemplo, tetigit cum limina villæ,
Aut abìt in somnum gravis; atque oblivia quærit;
Aut etiam properans urbem petit, atque revisit.
Hoc se quisque modo fugit: at, quum scilicet, ut fit,
Effugere haud potis est, ingratis hæret, et angit."

turns from side to side on his bed, in hope of that sleep which his fever denies, they fly to various scenes of public resort, in the midst of amusements, unamused; in the midst of pleasure, unpleased; and reluctantly return to their home, where God has given them a good inheritance. They have used, or rather abused, all their comforts. They are glutted with pleasure. Nothing has the grace of novelty to recommend it. Behold their dissatisfied countenances, and their artificial smiles, to hide them at the gay places of public amusement. Their appetite grown dull, this world affording no new joy, and the next never in their thoughts, they are, at first, the slaves of folly; and at last, the victims of despair.

How different is it with him who has happily been tinctured with religion in his early age, and learned to seek, as his chief good, "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding?" *Great peace have they that love thy law.** I do not affirm that the Christian religion pretends, like the arrogant philosophy of the Stoics, to place man out of the reach of evil, or to render him insensible of pain. A certain portion of evil and misery is to be the lot of every mortal; and wise purposes are effected by chastise-

They know not what they would have, but are continually seeking CHANGE OF PLACE, in the hope of laying down the burden of time. Tired of home, one man leaves his noble mansion, as often as he can, and then returns to it all on a sudden; just as miserable abroad as at home. Another drives his horses full speed to his country-house, dashing along as if he had heard the house was on fire, and was hastening to extinguish the flames. He no sooner sets his foot within the doors, than he begins to yawn or falls fast asleep; striving to forget himself in slumbers;—or else he turns the horses' heads and hurries post haste up to town again. Thus every one tries to run away from himself; but when he cannot escape, he reluctantly bears the unavoidable evil, and pines, a self-tormentor, in unwilling solitude. LUCRETIUS.

* Psalm cxix. 165.

ment, when suffered to operate in its regular manner in the production of humility, godly sorrow, repentance, and amendment. But this I say, and am justified in the assertion by the Scriptures of God, and by the experience of many pious believers, there is nothing which can lessen the evils of life so much, or teach a man to bear them with such fortitude, as a full dependence on the Deity, and a habit of seeking pleasure in warm yet rational devotion. It will ever be found by those who thus seek it faithfully.

It is not, indeed, to be believed, but that God, whose Providence superintends the animal and vegetable world, and the inanimate creation, should watch over the spiritual with peculiar care, and conduct it by his immediate influence. A soul, therefore, which, by piety and charity, humbly endeavours to obey the revealed will of God, and to render itself acceptable to the eye which is too pure to behold iniquity without offence, will probably be sure of peculiar regard. No evil so great shall happen to it; no misfortune so heavy shall befal it, but that a way to escape shall be opened, or a supernatural power of bearing it afforded. A ray of sunshine will beam upon it from the fountain of spiritual light, when the world presents nothing but darkness. Like the Alpine mountain, the good and devout Christian rises above the clouds, and enjoys a glorious sunshine, which erring mortals below him cannot partake. He who possesses the peace of God, may be said to resemble the halcyon, whose nest floats on the glassy sea, undisturbed by the agitation of the waves.

Men deem themselves fortunate in obtaining the patronage of a fellow-creature like themselves, elevated by the favour of a prince, or by his own industry,

above the common level. They feel themselves safe under his protection, from the evils of poverty. Yet what is the protection of man, of princes and nobles, to the protection of the Lord of Lords, the King of Kings, the Ruler of Princes? But the pious Christian believes firmly that he enjoys the unspeakable advantage. It is a continual feast to him. It is a perennial spring of living water. In adversity or prosperity, his CHIEF GOOD remains like the mountain, which cannot be moved. It is the rock of ages, on which he builds the fair fabric of his felicity.

What is there, in all the pomp of the world, and the enjoyments of luxury, the gratification of passion, comparable to the tranquil delight of a good conscience? It is the health of the mind. It is a sweet perfume, that diffuses its fragrance over every thing near it, without exhausting its store. Unaccompanied with this, the gay pleasures of the world are like brilliants to a diseased eye, music to a deaf ear, wine in an ardent fever, or dainties in the languor of an ague. To lie down on the pillow, after a day spent in temperance, in beneficence, in piety, how sweet is it! How different from the state of him, who reclines, at an unnatural hour, with his blood inflamed, his head throbbing with wine and gluttony, his heart aching with rancorous malice, his thoughts totally estranged from Him who has protected him in the day, and will watch over him, ungrateful as he is, in the night season! A good conscience is, indeed, the peace of God. Passions lulled to sleep, clear thoughts, cheerful temper, a disposition to be pleased with every obvious and innocent object around; these are the effects of a good conscience; these are the things which constitute happiness; and these condescend to dwell with the poor man, in his humble cottage in the vale of obscurity. In the magnificent

mansion of the proud and vain, glitter the exteriors of happiness, the gilding, the trapping, the pride, and the pomp; but in the decent habitation of piety is oftener found the downy nest of heavenly peace; that solid GOOD, of which the parade of the vain, the frivolous, and voluptuous, is but a shadowy semblance.

I see a party travelling, by choice, on the Sunday, (the day of rest appointed for man and beast, by the benevolent Being who made them,) with a speed that almost outstrips the wind. Whither are they hastening? To regions of delight; some place of modish resort; where the sound of the viol invites; where the song, and the dance, and the festive board, promise pleasure without alloy. Join the train awhile, and mark the event. The variety of objects dissipates care for a short time; but weariness soon ensues, and satiety converts the promised pleasure to indifference, at least, if not to pain. And now they return to their home, the seat of plenty, with countenances that by no means express satisfaction at what is just past; that satisfaction which might have been expected, considering the preparation, the expense, the haste, and the eagerness, which appeared in the commencement and progress of the fashionable excursion. Piety, charity, domestic comfort, have all been sacrificed at the shrine of fashion; and the fickle, unfeeling deity has bestowed nothing in return, but weariness, languor, and a total disrelish of the pleasures of simplicity, the sweets of innocence, the feast of benevolence, and the enlivening ardour of devotion.

To contrast the scene, I picture, a regular, respectable, religious family, spending their time, after the performance of their social, public, or professional duties, around the domestic fire-side, in peace and

love. Every countenance is illumined with cheerfulness. No tedium, no exhausted spirits, no pale ghastly visages, from the vigils of the card-table; no envious feelings, no jealousy nor rage at the sight of superior splendour. Pleased with a well-spent day, they fall on their knees before they retire to repose, and thank the Giver of all comfort for the mercies already received; and pray, with humble confidence, for protection in the night, and continuance of mercy during the remainder of life. Cheerful and refreshed, they rise in the morning, and go forth to the labours of life, chaunting the carols of pious gratitude. Here is enjoyment of existence; this is life indeed,* with a perpetual relish; not attended with the tumultuary ardours of a fever, but the gentle, pleasant warmth of sound health.

You, therefore, who, blessed by Providence with profusion of wealth, are enabled to make pleasure your constant pursuit, try the experiment, whether pleasure of the purest kind is not to be drawn from the fountains of piety and divine love. Amusements and pleasures, commonly so called, are not to be rigidly renounced. They are not only allowable, but desirable and useful; solacing poor human nature in its sorrows, and promoting, by temporary relaxation, the energies of virtue. But surely it is possible to retain religious principles inviolate, and to be uniformly actuated by religious sentiments, in a life occasionally diversified by cheerful, and moderate, and innocent amusements. Only *keep your heart with all diligence.* Let your imagination be pleased; your thoughts occasionally diverted: but let your heart be unseduced from the love of him who first loved you. Let your affections still point,

* *Hoc est vivere.*

like the needle to the north, wherever the vessel is blown by the winds, towards God. Your hands may be employed, your tongue employed, your feet employed, in the avocations of social life and civil society; but let your heart be at leisure for the things which belong unto your peace; which will render your life constantly cheerful, and your death as little painful as the struggles of nature will admit.

It is never improper to caution the Christian, who seeks the peace of God, against such a degree of impassioned religion as tends, by its violence, to destroy all rational devotion, or to abbreviate its continuance. There certainly are religious persons, who, through the disorder of their imagination, and the weakness of their judgment, seem not to enjoy that tranquillity, or peace of God, which religion is calculated to produce.

Gentleness and moderation contribute to the increase as well as duration of our most refined pleasures. We see nothing of extreme rigour, nothing of unnatural austerity, nothing of intemperate ardour, in the devotion of our Saviour or his disciples; so that they seem to be no less repugnant to the gospel, than to reason and philosophy. Nothing violently passionate is durable; no, not even the ecstasies of religion. Exorbitant passion is like a flood after great rains. However it may rush in torrents for a day, it will exhaust itself, and dwindle to the shallow stream, scarcely creeping within the banks of its natural channel.

The passions are the chief destroyers of our peace; the storms and tempests of the moral world. To extirpate them is impossible, if it were desirable. But to regulate them by habitual care, is not so difficult, and is certainly worth all our attention. Many men do evidently acquire a wonderful com-

mand of their passions, in the presence of their superiors, or when their temporal interest is concerned. And shall we not attempt it in the presence of God dwelling in us, and for an everlasting interest?

The task is facilitated by the grace of God, which certainly cooperates with man in every virtuous endeavour. To JESUS CHRIST, then, let us have recourse, as to the best philosopher. He who said to the sea, "Be still," will calm our passions, as he smoothed the waves. Peace was the legacy which he left to his followers. Hear his bland and soothing words: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you." "The work of righteousness," says Isaiah, "is peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever." "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you," adds St. Peter, "through the knowledge of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Not as the world giveth," says our Saviour, "give I peace." The world speaks peace when there is no peace. Dissipation, variety of worldly business, worldly cares, worldly company, riot, noise, intemperance, produce a tumult, which banishes reflection, but cannot cause serenity, self-possession, and composure. The sick man, who has recourse to opium and strong drink to lull his malady in a deceitful oblivion, increases his pain and his danger.

The Christian seeks peace, by seeking pardon of God by repentance. "Acquaint thyself with God, and be at peace." He seeks peace, by keeping a watch on those great destroyers of it, his passions. On these tumultuous waves he pours the oil of Christian love, and they are calm. Thus he lives;—at peace with himself, at peace with his neighbour, and at peace with his God.

Thus he lives; and when he quits this earthly

scene,—(like a river, whose banks are flowery, and whose waters limpid and smooth,)—he glides, unruffled, into the ocean of eternity. Go then, gentle spirit, to the realms of peace, and enjoy the peace of God!—in the bosom of *thy* father, and *our* father.* *Very pleasant hast thou been unto us,*† during the time of thy sojourning here. Dove-like were thy manners; for the Spirit, which descended like a dove, inspired thee with every amiable disposition, and above all, with the LOVE OF PEACE, national and public, as well as internal: and BLESSED ARE THE PEACE-MAKERS; theirs shall be the peace of God which passeth all understanding, in the KINGDOM of HEAVEN.

In the kingdoms of the earth, indeed, there is seldom any lasting peace. What Christian but must drop a tear over the fertile realms of Christendom crimsoned with human blood; shed at the instigation of the spirit of APOLLYON, or the DESTROYER, taking his abode in hearts which have rejected the Holy Ghost, the spirit of love, the God of peace! May the rulers of the world receive the Spirit of Christ, and heal the wounds of the people; so shall they experience, in the hour of their own distress, the peace of God which passeth all understanding, and their crowns shall be amaranthine.

* John, xx. 17. † 2 Sam. i. 26.

SECTION LVIII.

General Reflections on HAPPINESS.—ERRORS *in the Pursuit of it.—No* sublunary *Happiness perfect.—Christ's Invitation to the Wretched* —CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY *affords the highest earthly Satisfaction.—Its* SUMMUM BONUM *is a State of* GRACE, *or the Enjoyment of Divine Favour.*

To what purpose are laboured declamations on the misery of man? He can want no studied proofs of a wretchedness which he sees in others, and feels in his own bosom. To expatiate on the symptoms of a disease, without pointing out a cure or an alleviation, is only to add to the pain, by increasing the impatience of the sufferer.

After all the melancholy pictures of human life, it must be allowed, that there is much comfort in the world, blended with its misery. Look abroad, from the library into real life, and you will see a general appearance of cheerfulness. Though clouds intervene, sunshine predominates. The labourer and mechanic chant over their daily toil; and though they pause only to wipe the sweat off their brow, return to their work, after a short but hearty meal, or sweet slumbers on a bed of straw, not only without a murmur, but with alacrity.

The prospect of reward at the close of a laborious day, the vicissitudes of rest and labour, the succession of ideas in active employment, the warmth and agitation of the animal spirits consequent on exertion, superinduce a delightful oblivion of care, and render the state of those who are supposed to be the least happy, the poor and laborious, frequently most pleasurable.

Nor let the higher ranks among us be enviously and malignantly misrepresented. Many in the higher ranks devote their time to business and pleasure alternately, and though *the harp and the viol, the tabret and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts;** yet some of them, guided by prudence, moderation, and piety, take a delight, at the same time, *in regarding the work of the Lord, and considering the operation of his hands;*† suffering neither pleasure nor business to interrupt their endeavour to improve in grace, and to exercise themselves in works of devotion and charity. With respect to charity, which distinguishes this age and nation above all nations on the face of the earth, by whom are the great establishments for all infirmities and casualties raised and supported, but by the rich and noble, by successful men in business, who most benevolently endeavour to communicate the happiness to which they were born, or with which Providence has blessed their exertions? Happy in themselves, they endeavour to deserve or sanctify their prosperity, by imitating him who gave it, in acts of most disinterested beneficence. For a proof of this, look into our public diaries, and the registers of great charities; and see how eagerly the rich and great contribute to their support.

So that, upon the whole, there is certainly an appearance of goodness and of joy on the face of human affairs; and this appearance, in many cases, is, most certainly, supported by reality. The world abounds with good as well as evil. Our own disposition and discontent too often poison and imbitter the rich repast.

It is indeed evident that there is more good than

* Isaiah, v. 12. † Ibid.

evil in the world. Plenty is certainly more common than scarcity; health than sickness; ease than pain. And this is so far confirmed by experience, as to render the descriptions of human misery, which we read in declamatory harangues, worthy of little credit and attention. Few, comparatively, know what it is to be completely miserable. Who of us, in this country, does not every day enjoy some solid comfort? A vast majority is warmly clothed, plentifully fed, and accommodated with a house for shelter, and a bed for repose.

Yet let the balance be held evenly. There is, we all experience, an abundance of evil in the world; and it is aggravated and increased by fear, and the activity of a lively imagination.

It is true also, that the best of our pleasures and enjoyments are rather amusive, than perfectly and durably satisfactory. For who ever declared himself, in the midst of grandeur, pleasure, opulence, happy to the utmost extent of his wishes? Who but, in some moments, has felt a sentiment of discontent? Who ever said, "I am now in that settled state of enjoyment and perfect contentment, that I conceive not a wish of addition to it; I look not to a future day for an increase: I acquiesce; free at once from hope and from fear?" An involuntary sigh rises in the height of our prosperity.

I shall think myself not uselessly employed in the endeavour to discover the causes of man's failure in search of satisfaction. What is it that dashes his sweetest and most plentiful cup with a bitter mixture?

In the first place, man raises his expectations too high; beyond what nature and experience justify; when he ventures to promise himself any happiness without defect, and without abatement; a sun with-

out spot; a sky without a cloud. The world is not our home. The world is now old; and the experiment of attaining to perfection of happiness has been tried by every individual that ever existed in it. Many have left on record an account of their experiments, and an uniform avowal of disappointment. He, therefore, that would taste the happiness allowed to human nature, must learn to take aim at marks within his reach, to be duly sensible of little advantages and common blessings, daily exemption from evil, from pain, from debt, from extreme want, from infamy, from exile, from imprisonment. How much happier is he who has a sufficiency of food, of raiment, a comfortable house, and a warm bed, than millions of the human race! Yet these things are little thought of by those who murmur at the evils of life, and pine with the misery of their own situation. Something unpossessed still torments; yet all wish to appear happy.

Many things which, in the midst of our complaints, we possess and enjoy in security, would perhaps render half of our fellow-creatures rapturously delighted, though they, who were born to them, pay them not the least attention, in the eagerness of reaching after something more, something higher, something better, to be enjoyed at a future day; that day, which never comes, to mortal man. The possession of our SENSES entire, of our limbs uninjured, of knowledge and skill, of friends and companions, is often overlooked, though it would be the ultimate wish of many, who, as far as we can judge, deserve it as much as ourselves.

Many always compare themselves with those who are above them, without once looking into the vale below, where thousands stand gazing at them with envy and admiration. By this unfortunate com-

parison, their own good things lose, in their opinion, much of their value, and sometimes become totally contemptible.

When we consider the number and variety of evils, almost intolerable, in the life of man, we should learn to esteem every disaster incident to human nature, which has not yet fallen to our lot, as a just cause of self-congratulation, complacency, and gratitude. But, through envy, we turn from the misfortunes of others; and think only of those advantages which give them a superiority over our own condition. If we see a man deaf, or dumb, or blind, or lame, or poor, or in disgrace, we do not derive comfort from the consideration of our own exemption from his defects and calamities; but if we observe another adorned with beauty, endued with strength, elevated to a high rank, or loaded with riches, we secretly repine that we have not been equally blessed with worldly prosperity.

But let us consider how many there are, who would envy every one who has but health and liberty. Go into an hospital. Visit a poor-house. Inspect a prison. Compare your own health, your own competency, your own liberty, hard as you deem your lot, with the friendless wretch, who lies in the agony of pain, or languor of disease, with no help but the cold hand of official charity. No kind relative to soothe with his bland voice, to close his eyes, and shed a tear on his departure. Compare your lot with his who is loaded with chains, where the iron enters his soul, in a cold and damp dungeon. Compare it with that of your poorer neighbours, at the next door. Compare it with that of all the sons and daughters of affliction, a large family—every where to be found.

Men are, indeed, too apt to despise what are

called little advantages, common comforts, daily pleasures, hourly conveniencies; whereas they are often of the highest importance; as the general happiness of life is usually made up of particulars, which appear minute, but the sum of which makes a great total.—We wait till to-morrow to be happy; alas! why not to-day? Shall we be younger? Are we sure we shall be healthier? Shall we see better, hear better, taste better? Look at some aged miser, and judge. Then why cannot we be happy to-day, with health, a competency, and a clear conscience?

We are unwilling to be satisfied with the pleasures of simplicity, and the delights of nature. The beasts around us are contented. The lark soars, and sings in exultation; but man, forgetful of nature, must have recourse to art, to procure satisfaction; and things seem to have little relish, which are not seasoned by difficulty of attainment. The greater part of worldlings, especially gamesters, esteem mere tranquillity of mind, and ease of body, a state of insipidity.

But, considering the number of evils in life, man should learn to esteem every one which he has escaped, a just cause of self-congratulation and of gratitude. The absence of evil is a real good. Peace, quiet, exemption from pain, should be a continual feast. The aching of a tooth may deprive us of all complacency in the midst of plenty and magnificence. A fit of the gout or stone may make a crown of gold and emeralds, a crown of thorns. Then while we have no pain, no ach, no sickness, why do we not enjoy our tranquillity with pious exultation?

Here seems to be the grand error. There is a more general desire to appear happy, than to be so. Men live in the eyes of their neighbours. They wish

to possess a glittering happiness, careless of its solidity. They are desirous of being envied, talked of; and, in reaching after the shadow, they drop the substance.

Such, and many more, are the mistakes of men, in the pursuit of happiness. They all originate from a desertion of truth and simplicity; from a neglect of God and grace; from vanity, pride, folly, and vice.

But even the wise, the virtuous, the religious, and the comparatively happy, are still no more than men; and, being men, are subject to much real misery, to bodily pains, diseases, infirmity, decay, and worldly losses and crosses. The gardens of the world produce only deciduous flowers. Perennial ones must be sought in the delightful regions of Heaven. Roses without thorns are the growth of Paradise alone.

Thither then let us repair. And, happily, we are called by an invitation, no less urgent than kind and merciful. "Come unto me," says a friendly voice, "all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."* Let us consider the words properly, and allow them their full weight upon our hearts. The Redeemer of mankind, commissioned from the Creator, utters, from his own mouth, the gracious summons, "Come unto me." As if he had said:

"Your own wisdom, your own endeavours, unassisted, are insufficient to secure your happiness, and rescue you from misery. *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*" And who is there among us that does not labour? and who is there that is not heavy laden? and who does not want rest in the pilgrimage of life? The burden of our sins, the burden of our diseases,

* Matt. xi. 28.

the burden of our years, press heavily on us, and gladly would many resign their lives in weariness, if there were no danger of a world unknown; where heavier burdens may await him who impatiently throws down the load of life.

Thanks be to God that Jesus Christ will either lighten our load, or give us strength to bear it. He has reconciled us to God; he has taught us to consider our Maker as our friend and father; and that all things will work together for our good. "Who will show us any good?"* Jesus Christ has shown us our supreme good.

At his departure from us, he left us not alone; but sent his Comforter to us—the Holy Spirit of God; who will continue with all true Christians, even to the end of the world. It is he who preserves a lively, energetic devotion in us; and not only sanctifies and comforts, but illuminates our souls with the beams of grace. The happiness of man, after all that has been said upon it, depends upon a participation of this holy assistance; upon the divine Paraclete, the God of Consolation: and the misery of man is spiritual desertion.

Here then let us rest. Adieu to the distraction of philosophy; the never-ceasing disputes of unassisted reason; the dogmatical decisions of learned pride and sophistical vanity. To be happy, (Christianity teaches us,) we must be blessed with the presence of the Holy Spirit. In adversity, in prosperity, in sickness, and in health, our joys will be pure, our sorrow lightened with this holy emanation of the Deity in our bosoms. Natural evil we must feel; moral evil, and its effects, we shall often experience; but there will still remain in our hearts, if regenerated, a source of sweet enjoyment, of which

* Psalm iv. 6.

no external circumstances can utterly deprive us.

The method of obtaining this blessing, is to perform our duty to ourselves, our neighbours, and our God, with pure hearts, and a sincere desire to conform to the will of our Maker. Much time must be given to devotion; more to the offices of charity; much to works of industry in our calling or profession; while some may be indulged to innocent diversion. The heart will thus be renovated, and that change produced in our dispositions, which is termed, in Scripture, the becoming a new man; and, in the language of theology, regeneration.

Little do they know, who are involved in the continual hurry and dissipation of the world, of this wonderful change in human nature, and its heightening effect on the enjoyment of life. Business and diversions can afford no delight comparable to the sweet sensations of a soul composed and tranquillized by divine grace. In this state, a charming serenity diffuses itself over the mind, which becomes like those happy climes of poesy, where every breeze is gentle as a zephyr, the spring perpetual, and the earth teems, at the same time, with flowers of the finest hue, and fruits of the most delicious flavour. Nothing sublunary, indeed, is perfect; but there is every reason to believe, that the state of the regenerated Christian approaches as nearly to the bliss of Heaven, as it is possible, while the soul is incumbered with a mortal body.

We set out in search of happiness, and here we have found it. The question "who will show us any good?"* is now answered. The CHIEF GOOD of man is a STATE OF GRACE. Other pretensions to it are like shadows to the substance; which they may

* Psalm iv. 6.

resemble in shape, while they want its essence, its duration, its solidity. What we have found let us never lose. Let us build upon a rock. Let us daily grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Thus shall our happiness in this life, founded, as it will be, in piety, virtue, and the consequent favour of God, rise to more perfect happiness in a future state, where the passions and appetites of a mortal body shall not weigh down the pure ethereal spirit that, in its present state, with wings all too feeble, continually aspires to its native clime.

Come then, ye who have wandered, like bleating sheep, distressed and famished, without a shepherd, come to Jesus Christ, to the shepherd of your souls, who shall feed you in a green pasture, and by the river side. Come unto him, for he calls you, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and he shall give you rest; rest, in your passage through this turbulent scene; and not only rest, but fulness of joy at his right hand, when your wearied bodies shall lie down in the peaceful grave.

SECTION LIX.

Apologetical Conclusion; with a Recapitulation, and Addition of a few Particulars respecting the preceding subjects.

The world, on a superficial view of it, presents an appearance of gaiety. Deeply engaged in the pursuit of gain, honour, and amusement, few men would lament, like Calypso in Telemachus, if they were immortal, and doomed to remain, in everlasting youth and health, on this low orb, wretched as it is represented. But as all are conscious that this is impossible, the next endeavour is to drown thought in the

whirlpools of dissipation. Most persons, however, choose to be called Christians, and would be not a little disgusted with the officious monitor, who should venture to suggest to them that, as they seldom or never bestow on Christianity the least solicitude, they can have no just pretensions to the name.

But busy as men are, in pursuits foreign to piety, it is certain, that after a few short years, the principal concern of the proudest, bravest, and fairest of the sons and daughters of Adam, will be religion. To that friend, whom many slight in the season of youth, health, and prosperity, they will (secretly, perhaps, but eagerly) fly for succour, in the time of age, sorrow, sickness, and death. What, indeed, is man, in his most flourishing state? What, the most admired and distinguished individual of us all, but an infirm, dependent creature, subject, from the cradle, to ten thousand evils; doomed gradually, often painfully, to decay, and certainly, perhaps most deplorably, to die? Second childhood, idiotism, insanity, palsy, blindness, deafness, lameness! ye are powerful preachers to those who mark well your ravages among the sons of men, once most highly distinguished for strength, comeliness, genius, all that charms the heart, and dazzles the imagination with transient brilliancy.

"Think, mortal," says the poet, "what it is to die." Think also, I add, what it is to see those whom we love, die before us; die, agonized with pain, after languishing with lingering disease; to attend them, with all the blandishments of affection, without being able to contribute to their ease, or add one moment to their existence. Is there any partaker of human nature, however thoughtless, who, when he feels, actually brought home to his own bosom, or to his own family, the real calamities, the

sore distresses of life, will not be anxious to seek comfort of religion, to acquaint himself with God, and be at peace with him? His prospect in the world is forlorn and dismal. It is a barren land, where no water is. Though it flattered him in better days, it now turns away from him in the hour of his utmost need. Indeed, if it were still inclined to soothe him, it has no cordials for his heart, no balsams for his wounded spirit. To Heaven only he can look for comfort,* and there he will not seek it in vain. Reli-

* As examples of men well known, and recently in the land of the living, teach more effectually than any precepts and admonitions, I have selected the two following, to show how men of the world and men of pleasure are affected by disease and the decays of age.

The following verses, a translation of a Psalm, by the late Mr. COLMAN, who had been much conversant with the gay world, exhibit the state of mind to which the liveliest wits and men of fashion may be reduced, on a sudden, by sickness, by a STROKE OF THE PALSY, or any other malady:

"Psalm the 39th imitated in blank verse:

"I will take heed, I said, I will take heed,
Nor trespass with my TONGUE; will keep my mouth
As with a bridle, while the sinner 's near.
—Silent I mus'd, and e'en from good refrain'd,
But full of pangs, my heart was hot within me;
The lab'ring fire burst forth, and loos'd my tongue.
Lord, let me know the measure of my days;
Make me to know how weak, how frail I am!
My days are as a span, mine age as nothing,
And man is altogether vanity.
Man walketh in an empty shade; in vain
Disquieting his soul, he heaps up riches,
Knowing not who shall gather them. And now
Where rests my hope, O Lord! it rests with thee.
Forgive me mine offences! Make me not
A scorn unto the foolish! I was dumb,
And open'd not my mouth, for 'twas thy doing.
O, take thy STROKE away! thy hand destroys me.
When, with rebukes, thou chastenest man for sin,

gion has confessedly furnished a sweet solace, under extreme affliction, when the heart sickened at the

Thou mak'st his beauty to consume away:
Distemper preys upon him, as a moth
Fretting a garment. Ah, what then is man?
Ev'ry man living is but vanity!
Hear, hear my prayer, O Lord! O hear my cry!
Pity my tears! for I am in thy sight
But as a stranger and a sojourner,
As all my fathers were. O, spare me then,
Though but a little, to regain my strength,
Ere I be taken hence, and seen no more!" COLMAN.

Let us hear also LORD CHESTERFIELD, a complete man of the world. The following is an extract from one of his letters:

"I have run," says he, "the silly rounds of business and pleasure, and have done with them all. I have enjoyed all the pleasures of the world, and consequently know their futility, and do not regret their loss. I appraise them at their real value, which is, in truth, very low. Whereas those that have not experienced, always over-rate them. They only see their gay outside, and are dazzled with the glare. But I have been behind the scenes. I have seen all the coarse pullies and dirty ropes which exhibit and move the gaudy machines; and I have seen and smelt the tallow candles which illuminate the whole decoration, to the astonishment and admiration of the ignorant audience.

"When I reflect on what I have seen, what I have heard, and what I have done, I can hardly persuade myself that all that frivolous hurry of bustle and pleasure of the world had any reality; but I look upon all that is passed, as one of those romantic dreams, which opium commonly occasions; and I do by no means desire to repeat the nauseous dose, for the sake of the fugitive dream.

"Shall I tell you that I bear this melancholy situation with that meritorious constancy and resignation which most people boast of? No; for I really cannot help it. I bear it, because I must bear it, whether I will or no!—I think of nothing but killing time the best way I can, now that he is become my enemy.—It is my resolution to sleep in the carriage during the remainder of the journey."

"You see," says Bishop Horne, remarking on this passage, "in how poor, abject, and unpitied a condition, at a time when he most wanted help and comfort, the world left him and he left the world."

pleasures of the world, and viewed its pageantries with contempt. Bitterer than wormwood has been the cup of adversity; but religion has infused a honied drop into it, which has overcome the bitterness: gloomy as midnight has been the lowering sky, but religion has tinged the clouds with gold and purple, and opened a prospect of the blue expanse.

But what religion? There is no religion but the Christian, which, in the present state of society, can make any claim to general reception. There is none but the Christian, which can afford the smallest consolation. Explode Christianity, as some pretenders to benevolence seem to wish, and you rob the blind of their surest guide, and the wretched of their best friend and protector. You take away the staff of age, the chart and compass of youth, the pillow of pain, the grand column and ornament of human life. Man degenerates, without it, to a brute of superior sagacity to do mischief, and superior sensibility to suffer pain.

But there are many, and those able and distinguished men in the business of the world, who appear to reject Christianity entirely. Many give it no attention;* but contented with the decencies of life, and, coldly complying with outward forms, claim a merit in submitting quietly to its ordinances, and making no open opposition to it. Others profess to

' Compare those words with those of another person, who took his leave of the world in a very different manner.

"I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me at that day." St. PAUL.

* They know nothing about it, and therefore cannot desire or study it. IGNOTI NULLA CUPIDO.—The people perish through lack of knowledge. Hosea, iv. 6. The Indians prefer any bauble which rattles and looks fine, to their mines of gold.

believe all religion equally true, equally false, and equally useful to the politician. Most of these are probably driven, at last, by their distress, in the evil days, and in the anguish of their hearts, to seek the aid of her, whom they despised or neglected in prosperity, and to take refuge, during the storm, in the shelter of the temple. But is it not desirable, in every stage of life, to be under the protection of one, who is found so faithful a friend in the last stage? And is it not the part of every truly benevolent man, if opportunities offer, and more particularly, if his PROFESSIONAL DUTY not only justifies, but demands, an active interference in promoting the solid happiness of others, to endeavour to persuade his fellow-creatures to seek, in the most effectual manner, the light and consolation of Christianity. He can in no possible mode contribute so much to the melioration of society, and the improvement of the human race.* In a neighbouring country might lately be seen the misery consequent on renouncing Christianity. Mercy and Justice fled awhile from the land, together with the gospel. God avenged his cause in a most awful manner: and the people now seem sensible of the scourge.†

To stop the progress of infidelity, to resuscitate the dormant spirit of vital religion, the true nature of Christianity must be plainly pointed out to the mass of the people, the great as well as the vulgar; the great, I say, to whom, from thoughtlessness, and

* Machiavel, whom some will reverence who despise the most learned theologist by profession, Machiavel himself says, "There is no surer prognostic of impending ruin in any state, than to see divine worship neglected or despised." *Vol.* iii. *p.* 53. *London*, 1775.

† Hence the attempt in France to revive religion under the name of THEOPHILANTHROPISM: and this LOVE OF GOD AND MAN will, it is hoped, restore in time true Christianity.

immersion in sensuality, it is often little known,* however it may be professed. Christianity, indeed, it may be suspected, is too imperfectly understood, even by scholars, philosophers, and statesmen of the first rank, and the greatest celebrity.†

To call the attention of men to Christianity, and

* What is the GOSPEL? "The record that God hath given to us eternal life, and that life is in his Son." 1 John, v. 11. It is a question of prime importance. Yet there are able men, and men of singular address and dexterity in all political and commercial *business*, who perhaps never asked the question with seriousness; and who seem to be merely novices, or downright ignoramuses, in the school of Christ.

† Let such persons consider the economy of grace, as thus briefly displayed by Bishop Warburton, who, nevertheless, was a great opposer of the true doctrine of divine energy; and who, on that account, may have the more weight with many.

"The blessed Jesus came into the world to declare the good-will of our heavenly Father to the forfeited posterity of Adam. He testified the truth of his mission by amazing miracles; and sealed the redemption of mankind, by the more amazing devotion of himself to an ignominious death.

"But as the redemption, so generally procured, could only operate on particulars, under certain circumstances of faith and obedience, very repugnant to our corrupted nature, the blessed Jesus, on his leaving the world, promised his followers his intercession with the Father, to send another divine person—the Holy Ghost, called the *Spirit of Truth*, and the *Comforter*—who, agreeably to the import of those names, should cooperate with us in establishing faith, and in perfecting obedience; or, in other words, should sanctify us to redemption.

"This is a succinct account of the economy of grace; entirely consonant to our best conceptions of the nature of God, and the condition of man. For if man was to be reinstated in a free gift, justly forfeited, we cannot but suppose that as, on the one hand, it might be restored on what conditions best pleased the giver; so, on the other, God would graciously provide, that it should not be bestowed in vain.

"An atonement, therefore, was to be made for the offended majesty of the Father, and this was the work of the Son; and a remedy was to be provided for the miserable condition of man, which hindered the atonement from producing its effect; and this

to render its true genius and nature better known,* is the scope of this little book; a book by no means intended to promote the interest, or gratify the pride, of any particular division or subdivision of Christians, but to serve the common cause of all human beings, by maintaining the divine origin, describing the real essence and energy, and diffusing the powerful efficacy of that sublime philosophy, which, under the immediate operation of an all-wise and benign Deity, promises to tranquillize life, and conduct man through paths of peace to realms of eternal felicity.

What then is the principle of this philosophy, which gives it a decided superiority over all that has been taught in the groves of Academus, the Portico and the Lyceum? It is (as I hope has been evinced in the preceding pages) a BEAM OF LIGHT from the FATHER OF LIGHTS; a LUMEN DE LUMINE, LIGHT OF

was the office of the Holy Ghost; so that both were joint-workers in the great business of reconciling God to man.

"The office of the Holy Ghost is to ENLIGHTEN THE UNDERSTANDING, AND TO RECTIFY THE WILL."

Bp. WARBURTON'S *Sermons.*

This is the testimony of an adversary, as he seems, in his Doctrine of Grace.

"The Christian that rejects, reproaches, and writes against the necessity of immediate divine inspiration, pleads the whole cause of infidelity.—If ye will hold no higher a regeneration than can be had by a few drops of cold water sprinkled on the face, gods of wood and stone are good enough for such an elementary priesthood." LAW.

* "In many countries called Christian, neither Christianity, nor its evidence, are fairly laid before men; and in places where both are, there appear to be some, who have very little attended to either; and who reject Christianity with a scorn proportionate to their inattention; and yet are by no means without understanding in other matters." Bp. BUTLER.

"I have been so long conversant with the classics," said Dr. Conyers Middleton, "that I grow squeamish when I come to the Scriptures."

LIGHT; the breath of the power of God, restoring degenerate human nature to that image which it lost at the fall, and reestablishing it in primeval dignity. The Holy Ghost, it appears, is the divine Being, now and for ever engaged in effecting this happy renovation; in producing a change, which no human wisdom could ever accomplish, without supernatural assistance; without that gift, which our Lord gave to men after his ascension.

The elegant refinements of human philosophy may furnish a pleasing amusement for those who possess the advantages of a classical education, and of literary leisure. The Christian Philosophy alone is calculated for all mankind; this alone can bring peace at the last; peace, during the continuance of life, as well as at its close; a transcendent peace, called, in Scripture, the *peace of God, which passeth all understanding;* and which certainly constitutes that supreme good of man, in selecting which, human philosophy could never yet finally agree. Happily, it is a kind of philosophy, to which every human being, consistently with God's equity, may attain; requiring not cultured intellects, nor a life of academical seclusion, but faithful, fervent prayer, accompanied with sincere, though imperfect obedience. "If ye, being evil," says our Saviour, "know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Nothing is to be desired by mortal man, in comparison with this gift, *the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.** The end, it appears, to be pursued by this philosophy, is the attainment of the Spirit's influence; the means, prayer and obedience. Such is the sum and sub-

* Phil. i. 19.

stance of CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY;* a title which I have chosen, because, from a strange perverseness, a great part of the world, too often guided by names, is willing to listen to philosophy, while it closes the iron doors of prejudice against the voice of religion.

The divine energy announced to mankind in the glad tidings of the gospel, under the name of GIFTS and GRACE, operating, now, and for evermore, on every human heart prepared to admit it, appears, from what has been advanced in these pages, to be the living, everlasting Gospel, still accompanying the written word, and conveying illumination, sancti-

* This name Christianity bears in the writings of some of the ancient fathers. Thus *Justin Martyr*, speaking of Christianity, says,

"Εστι τω οντι ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΙΑ μεγιστον κτημα και τιμιωτατον Θεω, ωτε προσαγει και συνιστησιν ημας μονην· και οσιοι ως αληθως ουτοι εισιν οι φιλοσοφια τον νουν προσεχηκοτες." *Dialog. cum Tryph.*

He adds, that he found this philosophy, meaning the CHRISTIAN, the only philosophy that was useful and to be depended upon.

"Ταυτην μονην ευρισκον φιλοσοφιαν ασφαλητε και συμφορον." *Ibid.*

Isidore also terms Christianity the new and evangelical philosophy.

"Η νεα και ευαγγελικη ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΙΑ." EPIST. *lib.* iv.

And in another place he calls it the heavenly philosophy.

"ΟΥΡΑΝΙΟΣ ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΙΑ." EPIST. *lib.* v.

Several other fathers call it the Christian Philosophy.

Vide Sozomen, *Eccl. Hist. lib.* v. *cap.* 12.

And let it be remembered, that,

"*Non tam discendo, quam* PATIENDO *divina,* MENS PERFICITUR HUMANA."

"*Homines ideo falluntur, quod aut religionem suscipiunt, omissâ sapientiâ, aut sapientiæ soli student, omissâ religione, cum alterum sine altero esse non possit verum.*"

The human mind is perfected not so much by learning divine things, as by passively receiving the impressions of Divinity.

Men are deceived on this account, because they either adopt religion to the neglect of philosophy; or study philosophy alone, to the neglect of religion; whereas the one without the other cannot be what it strictly ought to be. LACTANTIUS *de falsa Sapient. lib.* iii.

fication, consolation. It would not cease to operate, being sent down from Heaven on our Lord's ascension, even if it were possible that ink and paper, by whose instrumentality the written word is transmitted, were utterly lost. It originates from Omnipotence, and cannot entirely rely, for its continuance or effect, on means merely human, weak, contingent, and perishable. He who once views the gospel of JESUS CHRIST in this light; he who considers it as a vital influence from Heaven, and recognises its energy on his heart, as he will do, in consequence of prayer and obedience, will want no external proof of the truth and excellence of Christianity. He will have the witness in himself; and stand in no need of the schoolmen's folios, the verbal subtleties of the critic, or the acrimonious disputes of the polemic. He will find, that some of the most learned men, the most voluminous writers on theological subjects, were totally ignorant of Christianity. He will find that they were ingenious heathen philosophers, assuming the name of Christians, and forcibly paganizing Christianity, for the sake of pleasing the world, of extending their fame, and enjoying secular honours and lucrative preeminence.*

* "There are those," says the Apostle, "who seek THEIR OWN, and not the things of Jesus Christ." PHIL. ii. 21.

Such as these are called by Ignatius χριστεμποροι, dealers and chapmen in Christ. Unprofitable truths they will have no more to do with, than traders with unsaleable commodities. "They would be *anything*-ARIANS, or *nothing*-ARIANS," said a facetious observer of men and manners, "for fat pluralities, lazy prebends, proud deaneries, and courtly bishoprics;" but every church must fall which leans on such rotten props as these.

In our commercial country, religion is often a branch of trade, and when borough interest prevails, a tolerably good speculation.

Bishop Horne says, "Those clergymen, who betray the cause of their Master, in order to be promoted in the church, are guilty of the worst kind of simony, and pay their souls for the purchase of their preferment."

"Godly persons," that is, Christian philosophers, are described, in those articles which all churchmen have most solemnly assented to, as "such as feel in themselves the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh, and drawing "*up their minds to high and heavenly things.*" He who feels the Spirit in him, will be conscious of possessing the pearl of great price, and will lock it up in the sanctuary of his heart, as his richest treasure, never to be despoiled of it by the seducing arts of false philosophy; never to exchange that pure gold, which is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, for the base metal of worldly politicians, who may endeavour, as they have done, to make truth itself alter her immutable nature, for the varying purposes of temporary ambition. Those doctrines of Christianity, which were true under the first Charles, will be considered, notwithstanding the subtle attempts of politicians, equally true under the abandoned profligacy of a second; or in subsequent reigns, when it was discovered by the court divines, that Christianity *was as old as the creation,* and the religion of grace a mere republication of the religion of nature.*

* This, though the pious Sherlock's doctrine, is nearly the same with the infidel Voltaire's, though not quite so honourable to Christianity.

"*Notre religion revélée n'est méme, et ne pouvoir étre, que cette loi naturelle perfectionnée ?*"—Our revealed religion is not, and indeed could not be any thing else but the law of nature advanced to perfection. *Discours sur le Théisme, par M. de* VOLTAIRE.

Of preaching natural religion for Christianity, let us hear the opinion of two other celebrated divines, and pious men.

"Scarce any thing," says Dr. Trapp, "has of late years been more prejudicial to religion, than the neglect of the theological part of it, properly so called: and it is very greatly to be lamented, that some writers, even of our own church, out of an undue terror, in opposing some doctrines of Calvin, have run into the other extreme, and have too little regarded the necessary *doctrines of religion.*"

The substance of Christianity can survive the wreck of empires, the demolition of temples made with hands, and the dismission of a superstitious or a time-serving priesthood. The living temple of the heart, where the Holy Spirit fixes his shrine, will stand unimpaired, amidst the fallen columns of marble. The kingdom of Heaven will remain unshaken, amidst all the convulsions of this changeable globe. We are told, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; and, though it should happen, in any country of Christendom, that the rulers should be infidels, and the visible church abolished; yet while there are human creatures left alive in it, the CHURCH of CHRIST may still flourish. The doctrine of grace is the only doctrine which tends to preserve Christianity in the world, independent of the caprice and PRIDE of statesmen and philosophers, or the wickedness of the people. Who shall be impious enough to maintain that God cannot preserve, by his own methods, his own dispensation?

They have dwelt upon the *agenda*, and totally neglected the *credenda*.

"To preach practical sermons, as they are called, that is, sermons upon virtues and vices, without inculcating those great scripture truths, of redemption, grace, and the like, which alone can incite and enable us to forsake sin, and follow after righteousness—what is it but to put together the wheels, and set the hands of a watch, forgetting the spring which is to make them all go?"

Bishop HORNE *and* Dr. TRAPP, *in his Preface to Preservative.*

What Quintilian said, may be applied to moral preaching, when unaccompanied with evangelical.

"*Nunc vero quæ velut propria philosophiæ asseruntur passim tractamus omnes: quis enim modo de justo, æquo, ac bono, non et vir pessimus loquitur.*"—But now, those topics which are asserted to be *peculiar* to Philosophy, all of us (Rhetoricians as well as Philosophers) treat of indiscriminately; for who, even the worst of men, hesitates to prate about the just, the equitable, and the good!

QUINT. Procœmium.

Civil and ecclesiastical power in union, together with the assistance of early education, may, indeed, retain, in a nation, the forms and the name of Christianity; but "the proper force of religion, that force which subdues the mind, which awes the conscience, and influences the private conduct, as well as the public," will only be preserved by a vital experimental sense of the divine energy of the Holy Ghost, whom we declare, with one voice, in our churches, whenever we repeat the Nicene creed, to be the "LORD AND GIVER OF LIFE."

I have endeavoured to diffuse this vital, experimental sense, from a conviction that it is peculiarly desirable at a time when infidelity is said to increase, beyond the example of any former age. But I know that I oppose prejudices deeply rooted, and far extended. These doctrines are frowned upon by men in high stations. I know that our Saviour has predicted, what experience has abundantly verified, that the preaching and teaching of the true gospel will ever create enemies in the world.* The modes of persecution differ in different periods; but, at all times, the defenders of evangelical truth are exposed to some mode or some degree of it. I know it well; yet, "Woe is me," may I and every preacher say, "if I preach not the gospel;"† the true gospel; such, at least, as, after the most careful search and long consideration, it appears to my imperfect understanding, and such as I believe it to be in my soul. I only desire the adversary, if any such should arise, to allow the possibility that he, as well as I, and the many great men who sup-

* But I must remember that, "the fear of man bringeth a "snare;—but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord, shall be safe." PROVERBS, xxix. 25.

† 1 Cor. ix. 16.

port me in my sentiments, may be mistaken; and to ask his own heart, whether he has hitherto studied the subject as a truly humble Christian,* a fallen, depraved, ignorant, and weak creature; or merely as a scholar, critic, philosopher, logician, metaphysician, controversialist, or politician, contending for the glory of victorious disputation, or the rewards of a profession established and encouraged by the state.

If any clergyman of the church of England should be disposed utterly to deny the doctrine of immediate grace, divine energy, and supernatural impulse, I would beg leave humbly and affectionately to remind him of the question proposed to him when he was ordained a minister of Christ, and the answer he then made, with every circumstance of religious solemnity, receiving the sacrament upon it, and thus evidently resting all his hopes of God's blessing on his sincerity.†

The question is "Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost, to take upon you this office and ministry, to serve God, for the promoting of his glory, and the edifying of his people?" "I trust so," replies the person to be ordained.‡

* ANTONINUS taught, that the very first requisite to form a philosopher, was *αποβαλειν οιησιν*, to throw away all conceit of knowledge.

† "All sacerdotal power is derived from the Holy Ghost; and they who do not acknowledge themselves under the Holy Ghost's influence, acknowledge that they have no sacerdotal power. Our Saviour himself took not the ministry upon him, till he had this consecration."

We think too lowly of the priest's office in our age. Very great it is, under the energy of the Holy Ghost. It is ministerial to the diffusion of divine grace. Is there any office so truly important and dignified?

‡ "Howbeit," says the Bishop, exhorting the ministers in the

As the topic is rather invidious, and certainly concerns myself as well as any of them whom I have the honour to call my brethren in the profession, I will refer to Bishop Burnet, to make remarks on the response to the interrogatory. "Certainly," says the truly able prelate, "the answer that is made to this, ought to be well considered; for if any one says, 'I trust so,' that yet knows nothing of any such motion, and can give no account of it, he lies to the HOLY GHOST, and makes his first approach to the altar with a lie in his mouth; and that not to men, but to God. Shall not God reckon with those who run without his mission, pretending that they trust they have it, when perhaps they understand not the importance of it? nay, and perhaps some laugh at it, as an enthusiastical question, who yet will go through the office. They come to Christ for the loaves; they hope to live by the altar and the gospel, how little soever they serve at one, or preach the other; therefore they will say any thing that is necessary for qualifying them (to receive the loaves and fishes), whether true or false."* The Bishop's animadversion is severe; and every man's own conscience must whisper to him, in his own case, whether it be just and true.

One thing, however, is certain, and sufficient for my purpose. It is plain that persons who enter on the ministry, thus declaring themselves to believe

office of Ordination, "ye cannot have a mind and will thereto yourselves; for that will and ability is given of God alone; therefore you ought and have need to pray earnestly for His Holy Spirit."

* The Bishop further says, "Every one that ventures to say he trusts he is inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost, (without certain dispositions, which the Bishop describes,) is a sacrilegious profaner of the name of God and of his Holy Spirit. He breaks in upon the church, not to feed, but to rob it."

Bishop BURNET'S *Past. Care*, p. 112.

that they are under a supernatural motion or impulse, cannot consistently deny, or explain away, the main principle of my book, which is the reality of such a supernatural motion or impulse. They confess that, in their own persons, they believe they have experienced that divine energy of the Holy Ghost, which, I maintain, inwardly moves the mind to believe in Christ, and inclines the heart to all moral virtue.

If the sublime and comfortable doctrine of immediate grace were generally preached, the churches would be better frequented, and infidelity rare.* The common people, unspoiled by vain philosophy, hunger and thirst for the spiritual food which comes down from Heaven. Ought not their shepherds to feed them with such as is convenient for them, and to lead them from broken cisterns and barren lands, to the green pasture, and streams of living water? Who shall judge what is most convenient for them? a few individuals, or the million, directed, in their choice, by the concurrent guidance of the church, the liturgy, and the Scriptures? It has been justly suggested, by a wit of antiquity, that the guests, and not the cooks, are to judge of the taste and salubrity of the viands prepared for the table. Now the guests invited to the spiritual feast, appear, by their numerous attendance, to prefer the food which comes

* "We must carry this yet further than the bare believing that these things (the doctrines of Christianity) are true; such a faith devils have. We must make our people understand, that this faith purifies the heart, and works by love; and it only becomes a saving and justifying faith, when, upon our entering upon the practice of those rules that this religion prescribes, we feel a real virtue derived into us, that makes us new creatures, and gives us such a vital perception of the truth of the promises made us in it, that we receive these, as earnests of our inheritance, and so taste and see that God is gracious to us. This makes us living stones in the spiritual building." Bishop BURNET'S *Charge*.

from above, the truly evangelical doctrine of grace. However unskilfully dispensed, the places of worship, where it is, or appears to be, dispensed at all, are thronged with multitudes, while other places are almost deserted. How are the churches crowded by young and poor persons, at confirmations; the whole of which office is founded, most evidently on the doctrine of grace, and the Holy Spirit's actual interposition.

The following is the Bishop's prayer, in the office of Confirmation: "Almighty and everlasting God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants, by water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins; strengthen them, we beseech thee, O Lord, with the Holy Ghost the Comforter, and daily increase in them thy manifold gifts of grace, the spirit of wisdom and understanding; the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength; the spirit of knowledge and true godliness; and fill them, O Lord, with the spirit of thy holy fear now and for ever." The Bishop then laying his hand upon every one severally, says, "Defend, O Lord, this thy child, with thy heavenly grace, that he may continue thine for ever; and daily increase in thy Holy Spirit more and more, until he come unto thy everlasting kingdom." He proceeds thus: "Almighty and everlasting God, who makest us both to will and do those things that be good and acceptable unto thy divine Majesty, let thy Holy Spirit ever be with them; and so lead them in the knowledge and obedience of thy holy word, that in the end they may obtain everlasting life. Vouchsafe to direct, sanctify, and govern both our hearts and bodies," &c.

Can any Bishop who reads these words,* or any

* What shall we think were Bishop HOADLEY'S ideas while reading them? Dr. EDMUND LAW, late Bishop of Carlisle, is a

parish priest who sends the young ones of his flock, to hear them, consistently deny the doctrine of divine energy, or immediate grace?*

Exclusively of this sublime doctrine, the gospel, considered merely as a book of morality, has not so great an advantage over the Koran, as every Christian must wish and believe it to possess. Mahomet requires in the Koran, "the belief of one God, trust in him, frequent prayer and fasting, almsgiving even to strangers, keeping of covenants, justice in dealings, patience in adversity; to honour father and mother, and to maintain them if they are old and poor. He forbids usury, bearing false witness, profane swearing, and the murdering of infants, which had formerly been common in Arabia." The Mahometan also allows Jesus to be a prophet sent from God, and commissioned to be a great instructor, reformer, and Saviour. I say, divest Christianity of the gift which our Lord gave to men after his ascension, and the infidel will place Christ far below Socrates, Plato, Epictetus, Seneca, and rank him with Mahomet, or even in a lower class; since there are many who deem the Koran a very fine composition, far superior to the narratives of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and

strenuous opposer of the doctrine of the Spirit's evidence. See some very cold, jejune, and imbecile observations on the subject, in a work entitled, "*Considerations on the Theory of Religion,*" pages 17, 18, &c. and in that dull book, with duller notes, "*King's Origin of Evil.*" I am informed that this learned and respectable man has been considered as the founder of a sect of Free-thinkers, at Cambridge, some of whom have written books on his principles, and occupied distinguished stations in the church; whereas their proper place was the mathematical chair, where they might, without mischief, and with much advantage, have lectured on algebra.

* Bishop Beveridge says, "A man may as soon read the letter of the Scripture without eyes, as understand the mysteries of the gospel without grace."

John, and to the epistles of Paul, the chief of the apostles.

Divest Christianity of the Spirit's energy, and you rob it of its appropriate, distinguishing, and exclusive excellence and glory. You place it among the modes of superstition which, at various times, have been encouraged by states, in order to facilitate the movements of the political engine, in almost every country on the face of the globe. You make it the invention of man; and, as the invention of man, it will often be despised, in comparison with the philosophy which prevailed in the elegant schools of Athens and Rome, and which clothed its fine morality in all the seducing embellishments of a polished diction. The writings of Plato and Cicero will be preferred to those of the evangelists and apostles, if the pearl which enriches the composition of the latter, above all that human ingenuity can contrive, be torn from its place. That pearl is figuratively emblematic of the Holy Spirit's inestimable influence.

The ray of divinity, the anointing of the Spirit, shed a heavenly effulgence on the page of the written gospel, which all human lights but faintly emulate. These are merely moons or satellites. Christianity is the sun of the system. I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD, says Christ himself. Let us remember, that it is the inspiration that makes an oracle; not the priest or the shrine. Take away the spring from the time-keeper, and though the wheels are curiously contrived, and the gold in which it is cased, and the jewels with which it is adorned, may still be valuable, yet it will no longer be esteemed but as a costly toy, or looked at, by those who want information, with confidence. Thus the gospel will have no vital, converting effect, when considered only as an historical narrative, with moral precepts occasionally inter-

spersed, but unaccompanied with the ministration of the Holy Spirit.

For political and interested purposes, the gospel may be talked of in churches and universities; it may be scholastically defended, and generally professed, and yet totally misunderstood and misrepresented. It will have no influence on the hearts of men: no, not on the hearts of the very persons who thus talk of it, profess it, defend it; nor of those who read or listen to the most elaborate apologies, defences, and demonstrations. Christ must be formed in the soul, before the soul can recognise the truth and efficacy of Christianity.

Nearly two thousand years have elapsed since the written gospel was promulged: and it has appeared to stand in need of defences and apologies to this very hour. Nor have defences or apologies been deficient in number, or in sagacity and erudition. Fabricius reckons up several hundred books in defence of the Christian religion.* Diligent as he was, he has omitted many; and since his time, there has been a very considerable addition to the number. Yet the cause is said still to labour; and appearances justify the assertion. Accordingly, we have lately seen ingenious theologists, and excellent writers, called forth, by the exigencies of the times, in our own country, almost two thousand years after the origin of Christianity, and after all the preceding labours of divines, to display its evidences, as if it were the production of yesterday. Such a display is said to be more necessary than ever; and Europe has produced many excellent works of the kind. Such books furnish exercise for the schools. May they be efficacious, as they are learned and ingenious! May they carry conviction to the heart, produce a

* See his Bibliotheca Græca.

lively faith, and refute the gainsayers! If they should fail, their failure must not be attributed to any defect of abilities in their authors, but to the omission of the internal evidence of the Holy Spirit. They are, almost without exception, above the reach, and disgusting to the taste, of the multitude; and let it be duly remembered, that to mere human reason and human learning, the infidel is ever ready to oppose weapons from the same armoury. His heart must be pierced with the two-edged sword of the Spirit, before he will surrender to Faith the citadel of his own reason.

But however the works now alluded to may succeed in carrying conviction to the hearts of men, it is certain that different persons, in different ranks of life, with various degrees of natural sensibility and intellectual improvement, will be struck, respectively, with different arguments, and actuated by diverse modes of persuasion. A learned defence or proof of Christianity, which is extolled by some, shall appear to others dull, lifeless, and totally foreign to the purpose. What is slighted by the few, may convince the many. On reading the book of the world, as a comment on the books of the library, and turning over the pages of experience, as a criterion of written wisdom, I think I have observed that critical and historical evidence, in Christian theology, however it may edify the scholar, has little or no good effect on the multitude. By them it is seldom attended to at all; very imperfectly understood when attended to; and, when both attended to and understood, more frequently raises doubts and suspicions, than produces firm belief, and that holy frame of mind which regulates the conduct of life, and supplies a heartfelt satisfaction. The poor, who are the major part of human beings, in all ages and countries, and to whom our Saviour

particularly addressed his preaching, seldom know that books of critical theology exist, and would certainly never become Christians, or have a just idea of what is meant by Christianity if they were not addressed in a manner more authoritative, and more divinely influential.

Popular modes of recommending Christianity ought to be adopted and encouraged, even by the profoundest thinkers and most philosophical divines. Their favourite mode might convince only one description of persons, and those not numerous, in the infinite variety of which the mass of mankind is composed. So long as Christian faith, Christian practice, and human happiness are more and more promoted, however lowly the men, and however mean the books that promote them, let the benevolent rejoice. Abstruse scholars, mathematicians, metaphysicians, and logicians, have often little relish for Christianity, till it is formed into a system, methodical, subtle, erudite. Their religion must too often be such only as furnishes matter for ingenious disquisition. They are apt, in the pride of scientific improvement, to despise the simplicity of the gospel. A religion, however, merely intellectual, if there be any which may be so denominated, is essentially different from, and inferior to, what I have in this book inculcated, under the idea of cordial religion.* The one qualifies for degrees in an university school; the other is calculated to influence the conduct of all men, in the walks of common life; in the court, in the city, in the camp, and in the market-place. High, low, rich, and poor, learned and unlearned, meet together in the school of Christ, and are there equally

* "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." *Rom.* x. 10.

"If thou believest with all thine heart." *Acts*, viii. 37.

favoured with grace, and instructed in the knowledge which leadeth to salvation. Ill would it fare with mankind, if they must be linguists and historians, before they can be duly informed of the nature of that religion, which was intended for the happiness of all; and on the neglect and ignorance of which, they are obnoxious to divine displeasure.

Systematical or intellectual religion may employ the pen of a ready writer, or the tongue of a voluble disputant in the academical or ecclesiastical chair; but cordial religion, effectually, though silently; certainly, though unostentatiously; sweetens, softens, and spiritualizes, the human disposition. It may not gratify the pride or serve the worldly interest of individuals, but it elevates and refines the general nature of man.

How is this religion to be learned?* Not from systems, not from critics or metaphysicians, not from heathen historians and moralists, but by the teaching of God, or the divine energy of gospel grace. Such is the principle of what I have ventured to term Christian Philosophy,† in contradistinction to the

* Not by the letter, but by the Spirit, was MARY MAGDALEN learned. And how are your family, your mother and sister, your servants, your poor neighbour, made Christians—by Dr. Clarke? by academical professors? or by the gospel accompanied with immediate grace?

"But whom say ye that I am? Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; MY FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN HATH REVEALED IT UNTO THEE."

MATT. xvi. 15, &c.

Our Saviour does not say that Peter had done well to form that conclusion, from reasoning on what he saw and heard; or deriving the conviction from any human means; but he says, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven."

† That experience is the best guide to Christian knowledge, is Dr. South's opinion:

"The truths of Christ crucified are the Christian's Philosophy,

philosophy of heathenism, and modern infidelity. It is clear, amidst some obscurity,* from the whole tenour of the gospel and epistles, that since our Lord's ascension, the beneficial purposes of Christianity are accomplished by the continual agency and never-failing superintendence of the Holy Spirit. I would by no means proceed so far as a writer some hundred years ago, who, observing the great and constant power attributed, by the written gospel, to the Holy Ghost, published a book, which he entitled, EVANGELIUM SPIRITUS SANCTI, or, *the Gospel of the*

and a good life is the Christian's logic; that great instrumental, introductive art, that must guide the mind into the former; and where a long course of piety, and close communion with God, has purged the heart, and rectified the will, and made all things ready for the reception of God's Spirit, knowledge will break upon such a soul, like the sun shining in his full might, with such a victorious ray, that nothing shall be able to resist it.

"It is experience that must give knowledge in the Christian profession, as well as all others; and the knowledge drawn from experience is quite of another kind from that which flows from speculation and discourse. It is not the opinion, but the path of the just, that the wisest of men tells us, shines more and more unto a perfect day. The obedient, and the men of practice, are those sons of light, that still outgrow all their doubts and ignorances; that still ride upon these clouds, and triumph over their present imperfections; till persuasion pass into knowledge, and knowledge advance into assurance; and all come, at length, to be completed in the *beatific vision*, and a full fruition of those joys, which God has in reserve for them whom, by his grace, he shall prepare for glory." Dr. SOUTH.

Dr. South, a man of wit and most vigorous intellect, was particularly active in decrying the doctrine of immediate grace, because the COURT discountenanced those who maintained it: and therefore what he has here said must be allowed to be extorted from him, by the force of truth opposing royal influence and political religion, which varies as the wind blows.

* "The obscurity and difficulty of the Scriptures serves," says Bishop Wilson, "to subdue the pride of man; to convince us, that to understand them, we have need of a light superior to reason, and that we must apply to God for help."

Holy Ghost; but, at the same time, it appears to me evident, from the declarations of Jesus Christ, that the gospel is now chiefly efficacious, as it has been ever since the ascension, by the operation of the Holy Ghost; the wakeful, tutelary guardian of every human creature. He may be resisted; his holy fire may be quenched; his temple may be polluted; and he may in consequence, depart in displeasure. Happy would it be, if appearances did not justify the apprehension,* that he is actually resisted, his holy fire quenched, his temple polluted, and both his displeasure and departure little regarded. It is the scope of Christian Philosophy to prevent this dreadful calamity.

To inquire HOW† the Spirit operates, is fruitless, if not presumptuous. It is enough for man to know, that it does operate; that, unless the words of Scripture are violently tortured out of their meaning, out of that plain sense which every reader of competent judgment and of integrity, unwarped by prejudice, must allow them to bear, the Spirit of God is at this moment effecting, in the bosoms of all who are duly prepared for its energy, the grand purpose of our Saviour's incarnation. Great indeed is the mystery: but equally mysterious are the processes of nature.‡ All around us is mystery. Our

* The prevalence of WAR and the general approbation it meets with, is an indubitable proof that the Spirit of Christ is resisted and quenched by poor mortals, who, unappalled by the jaws of death opened to receive themselves, are continually pointing their weapons against unoffending millions, in unjust and unnecessary wars, begun and continued by the pride and folly of the narrow-minded, sensual, corrupt, proud, avaricious, and unbelieving.

† "*Vocula illa quomodo,*" Luther used to say, "*est detestabilis.*" —That little word *How* is detestable.

‡ "Is the doctrine of grace more stupendous than the velocity of motion given to light?" Bishop WARBURTON.

very existence, our nutrition, the motion of a muscle in our bodies, is a wonderful arcanum, too difficult to be accounted for by reason. Yet, I believe, and know, that *I live, and move, and have my being*, though I cannot explain the union of soul and body, the mode of alimentary supply, or the cause of muscular motion. So also the spiritual life and motion are inexplicable. But this is certain: he who believes the Scriptures, must believe its reality. And he who is once truly and experimentally convinced* of the Spirit's operation, will want no other evidence; and he who tastes the fruits of the Spirit, will desire no other display of the excellence of Christianity. Thus will the purpose of my book be accomplished. The evidence and excellence of Christianity will be felt† and acknowledged by every man, who be-

* "Η της ΠΕΙΡΑΣ ακριβεια κατισχυει την των λογων πιθανοτητα." —The accurate and certain knowledge of actual experience, surpasses all that can be taught by the persuasive powers of oratory or composition. DIOD. SIC. *Hist. lib.* 1.

Prayer is the means of producing this experience in religion.

"If mankind are corrupted and depraved in their moral character, and so are unfit for that state which Christ is gone to prepare for his disciples; and if the assistance of God's Spirit be necessary to renew their nature, in the degree requisite to their being qualified for that state, all which is implied in the express, though figurative declaration, 'Except a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God:' supposing this, is it possible any serious person can think it a slight matter, whether or no he makes use of the means, expressly commanded by God, for obtaining this divine assistance; especially since the whole analogy of nature shows that we are not to expect any benefits, without making use of the appointed means for obtaining or enjoying them? Now reason shows us nothing of the particular immediate means of obtaining spiritual benefits. This, therefore, we must learn from Revelation."—And Revelation says, "Ask, and it shall be given." BUTLER's Anal. Part 2. c. 1.

† "We not only believe it, but we feel it too; we feel the comfortable influences, the sacred emanations of the Holy Spirit upon us; more particularly at those offices of devotion, wherein he

comes a convert to the doctrine of grace. He will acquire a spiritual understanding;* his rational faculty, as to spiritual matters, will be sublimed and refined in such a manner as to supersede the necessity of those voluminous, far-fetched, and elaborate proofs and defences of Christianity which have been enumerated, in a long catalogue, by *Fabricius;* and which, one after another, like abortive productions, have dropped into the gulf of oblivion, and left Christianity just where they found it. Indeed, as defences of this kind have increased, Christians appear to have decreased. The cavils introduced for refutation have lived, and the refutations died and been forgotten.

But doctrines which cannot be refuted by Scripture, are sometimes exploded by the illiberal means of stigmatizing them with an offensive or unpopular name. This practice has always been highly detrimental to the diffusion of genuine Christianity. It causes opinions to be condemned in the gross. It induces the mind of the careless contemptuously to reject the mass, without selecting the wheat from the chaff, and, indeed, without the trouble of examination. There is a vicissitude or fashion in religious doctrines, as well as in the modes of dress and external behaviour. Such a book, says the leader of

descends upon us also, as he did once upon our blessed Saviour, like a dove, and sheds his grace upon us, in some measure, with those excellencies which become the sons of God.

"Or rather, he descends upon us, as he did once before, upon the face of the waters, when he brought beauty and order upon that which before was nothing but deformity and confusion."

Bishop HICKMAN.

* Col. i. 9. "We pray for you that ye may be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding."—Again, "Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things." 2 Tim. ii. 7.

the day, is Armenian, or Calvinistical, or methodistical, and it must be cried down by every pamphleteer or controversialist, who is aspiring to favour and preferment. But away with names, and the petty distinctions of religious party. Are you a Christian, or wish to be one, in deed, not in word only; for the sake of spiritual, not temporal purposes? Then drop your prejudices, and seek the SPIRIT OF CHRISTIANITY; not in systems, but in the written gospel, assisted by prayer, and the pious illustrations of men sincere and good, however they may have been reviled or neglected, through prejudice, political artifice, or mistaken zeal. When you have thus found the truth, show its influence by your charity. Be united to all Christians, as well as to Christ; and beware of making distinctions, by nicknames, and thus exciting envy, wrath, malice, which are of a nature opposite to the fruits of the Spirit, love, joy, and peace. Good men should join in a firm phalanx, that the evil may not triumph on their divisions. Let all who are united under the banners of Christ, hail one another as brother Christians, though they may differ on the subject of church discipline, rites, ceremonies, or even non-essential doctrine.

"If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort in love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, and of one mind."*

Let us consider how the hard-hearted, unconverted, depraved, and worthless part of mankind exult, while Christians, agreeing in essentials, quarrel and revile each other, not on the substance of religion, but on the mere shades of difference in opinion in matters of indifference. Let not the Philistines triumph. Let

* Phil. ii. 1, 2.

the olive-bearing army of peace-makers be combined under the banners of benevolence. Theirs is an unbloody crusade ;* theirs is the contest of love. The victories in their warfare are over sin, misery, and death; and their crown, immortality. Let them march on to the soft harmony of Hosannas and Hallelujahs, uninterrupted by the discordant din of angry contention. Are you a sincere believer? a lover of God and man? I salute you from my heart as my brother in Christ, whether, in consequence of your birth and education, you formed the creed you utter at Rome, at Geneva, or in your closet at home. The Holy Ghost is the centre of our union; and all who are joined to him, must be associated in love.

Under the illustrious champions of Christianity, who flourished in England during the last century,† great were the triumphs of GRACE over human obduracy. *The word of God was mighty, and cast down imaginations.*‡ The sword of the Spirit, a figurative sword, the only one approved by Christianity, wielded by men who, like these, fought the good fight of faith, has been irresistible. But many, since their time, have let it rust in its scabbard, and used, as a substitute for it, the wooden batoon of heathen ethics and modern philosophy, in a kind of mock fight, beating the air, to the amusement of the indifferent or unbelieving spectator. The men of the world,

* "The pope would have done well to have thrown away his keys, (as they say one of them once did,) before he took the sword into his hands."

† "But now," says Bp. Warburton, "the profession of the Christian faith is attended with ease and honour; and the conviction, which the weight of human testimony, and the conclusions of human reason, afford of its truth, are abundantly sufficient to support us in our religious perseverance." Why then the general apostasy in France and partial one in Great Britain?

‡ 2 Cor. x. 5. διαλογισμους, which we render *imaginations*, certainly signifies *reasonings*.

who laugh at religion, and the pretended philosophers, who reason against it, observing that the sword of the Spirit was no longer used, came forth with the renewed and increased audacity of those who love to display their prowess, when there is but a feeble opposition. They sang the song of victory, and ventured to suggest that Christianity, conscious of the badness of her cause, had surrendered in fact, though she still kept up the appearance of defence, for the sake of decency, lucre, and political deception. Infidelity plumed herself on her fancied conquest, and has long been endeavouring to sway her sceptre over the most polished countries of Christendom. In France, at last, she flatters herself she has gained a complete victory, and silenced her opponent for ever.

Let us mark and deplore the consequence to morals and society. Extreme selfishness, pride, vanity, envy, malice, hardness of heart, fraud, cunning, and the false varnish of external decorum, hiding internal deformity, have remarkably prevailed in recent times, in the most polished regions, rendering man, as an individual, wretched and contemptible, and society comfortless and insecure. The human race has degenerated, in proportion as faith has diminished. The true spirit of Christianity, which can alone dignify human nature, and soften and liberalize the obdurate, contracted, selfish bosom of the mere natural animal,* man, has not been sufficiently diffused,

* I hope the present time is not that of which the Apostle speaks: "The time will come, when they will not endure sound doctrine." 2 Tim. iv. 3.

Men who preach against divine grace, may be said to be those whom Christ addresses in these words:

"Ye shut up the kingdom of Heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in." Matt. xxiii. 13.

But while God's eternal truth is its foundation, and God's Holy

since it has been fashionable to extol natural religion, by depreciating grace; and the result has been, a deplorable profligacy both in principle and practice.

How devoutly then is it to be wished, that this true spirit may revive; that the divine influence of the GENUINE GOSPEL* may again prevail, and melt the heart of steel, and bow the stubborn knees of the men of the world, and the wise men whom the world admires? Behold them pursuing their own petty, selfish, sordid purposes, regardless of all others, but as they serve their own interest or pleasure; neither loving God nor man, and depraved to a nature almost diabolical, by habits of fashionable voluptuousness, selfishness, and cruelty, authorized by the most illustrious examples in high life. Behold this diabolical character transforming itself to an angel of light, by studied embellishments and polished manners, in which truth, honour, and benevolence are assumed as a cloak to cover the basest treachery, the vilest arts of dissimulation. Behold this character recommended, with all the charms of language, by one of the first noblemen, wits, and writers of the times, as the mark of the most solid wisdom; behold it, in consequence of recommendation so powerful, spreading among the youth of the nation, and diffusing a polished, splendid misery, like the shining appearance which is seen on masses of corruption and putrescence. "Ye are the salt of the earth," says our Saviour; evidently meaning the salt that is to preserve the world from a corrupt state, by becoming the means of grace to those who hear you preach and teach the true doctrine. How is he then the friend of man, or of his country, who obstructs the prevalence of such doctrine? Yet men,

Spirit its guard, neither violence nor treachery can subvert the kingdom of Heaven.

* Ψυχικος.

apparently good and learned, have united with the unprincipled, in placing every obstacle in the way of its diffusion among the people.

The grace of God is favourable to the tranquillity and security of the state; to the community, as well as to individuals, by teaching virtue of the most beneficial kind under the strongest sanction. "The grace of God," says the Apostle, "teaches us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world." Yet against the prevalence of this grace of God, many pens and tongues have been employed during the last fourscore years; the pen and tongues, not of profligate infidels only, but of divines, teaching, for Christianity, a moral system of philosophy, well known long before the nativity of Christ;* and

* Yet the heathens themselves, mere moralists as they are often considered, had an idea of the divine energy. Remarkable are the words of Maximus Tyrius.

"Do you wonder that God was present with Socrates, friendly, and prophetic of futurity—an inmate of his mind?—A man, he was, pure in his body, good in his soul, exact in the conduct of his life, masterly in thinking, eloquent in speaking, pious towards God, and holy towards men."

The doctrine of divine assistance, or of the immediate operation of the heavenly Spirit on the mind of man, is so far from unreasonable, that it was maintained by some of the greatest masters of reason, before the appearance of Christianity.

"The vestiges of this sublime truth are to be traced in all nations, ages, and religions, and," says a celebrated author, "they are emanations of the antediluvian tradition, more or less disguised and adulterated."

The heathens did not affirm that the knowledge they possessed of theology was derived to them from reason; for Plato expressly says it is Θεων εις Ανθρωπους δοσις, the gift of gods to men,—the effect of divine communication. They deemed it *supernatural*, that reason should discover the will of God; a gift above nature, (δωρεαν υπερ φυσιν νικωσαν την φυσιν,) and overcoming nature in its present state of imbecility. The dead may as easily arise and walk, as the mind of man, fallen, as it is, into a state of spiritual death,

thus rendering, as far as their efforts could prevail, his gospel a superfluous, and even ugly excrescence upon it.

raise itself to God and a divine life. Nothing can enable man to do those things which are above his *natural powers,* but *supernatural* aid, and that must come from the influence of the Deity.

It is, however, worth while to mark the discordant and inconsistent opinions of celebrated heathens on the subject of divine assistance.

"*Bonus vir sine Deo nemo est.*"—No man is a good man without the assistance of God. SENECA, *Epist.* 41.

"*Miraris hominem ad Deos ire? Deus ad homines, imo (quod proprius est) in homines venit: nulla sine Deo mens bona est. Ascendentibus manum porrigunt.*"—Do you wonder that man goes to God? Why, God comes to man; nay, (which is nearer still,) enters into him. No man has a good mind without God. When men endeavour to climb up to heaven, the gods extend a hand to help them thither. *Epist.* 73.

"*Deus in humano corpore hospitans.*"—God dwelling in the human body. *Epist.* 31.

Yet this same philosopher says, in another place, "*Est aliquid quo sapiens antecedat Deum. Ille naturæ beneficio, non suo, sapiens est.* In one respect a philosopher excels God. God is obliged to *nature* for his wisdom, and cannot help being so. The philosopher thanks himself only." *Epist.* 53.

"*Atque hoc quidem omnes mortales sic habent* externas commoditates, *vineta, segetes, oliveta, ubertatem frugum et fructuum, omnem denique commoditatem, prosperitatemque vitæ, a Diis se habere; virtutem autèm nemo unquam acceptam Deo retulit. Nimirùm rectè. Propter virtutem enim jure laudamur, et in virtute recte gloriamur. Quod non contingeret, si id* donum a Deo, *non a nobis haberemus. At vero aut honoribus aucti, aut re familiari, aut si aliud quippiam nácti sumus fortuiti boni, depulimus mali, cùm Diis gratias agimus, tùm nihil nostræ laudi assumptum arbitramur. Num quis, quod bonus vir esset, gratias Diis egit unquam? at quòd dives, quòd honoratus, quòd incolumis. Ad rem autem ut redeam, judicium hoc omnium mortalium est, fortunam a Deo petendam, a seipso sumendam esse sapientiam.*"—All mankind hold the opinion, that external advantages, such as vineyards, corn fields, olive gardens, abundance of all the various fruits of the earth, lastly every thing that tends to the accommodation and prosperity of life, is derived from the Gods; but no man ever acknowledged himself indebted to God for his VIRTUE. Undoubtedly this judgment is right and reasonable. For we are properly

There is a kind of wisdom, we are told on the best authority, "which descendeth not from above, but is EARTHLY, SENSUAL, DEVILISH."* No wonder that men, who are taught, by their instructors, to pursue this wisdom, and, in effect, to reject the gospel at the very moment they are solemnly professing it, should become (like the wisdom which they cultivate, and which the Apostle so strongly reprobates) earthly,

commended for our virtue, and we justly glory in our virtue; which could not be, if it were a gift of God, and not a possession derived entirely from ourselves. But different is the case when we receive any accession of honour and fortune, or if we get any unlooked-for advantage, or avoid any imminent evil; for then, as we thank God for it, so we assume no merit or praise to ourselves on the occasion.

Did any man ever return thanks to the Gods that he was a good man? No; he returns thanks to the Gods because he is a rich man, because he has received some public honour, or because he enjoys a state of safety.

To return then to the point I am maintaining. It is the unanimous opinion of mankind, that success or good fortune in the world is to be sought of God, but that wisdom is to be derived from one's self entirely. CICERO, *de Nat. Deor. lib.* iii. *c.* 36.

"*Multos et nostra civitas et Græcia tulit singulares viros quorum neminem, nisi juvante Deo, talem fuisse credendum est.*"—Our country (Rome) as well as Greece has produced many extraordinary men, not one of whom, I believe, would ever have been such, but by the assistance of God. CIC. *de Nat. Deor. lib.* 2.

"*Nemo igitur vir magnus sine aliquo afflatu divino usquam fuit.*"—No man was ever a great man without something of divine inspiration. CIC.

"*Hic est quisquam gentis ullius qui ducem naturam nactus ad virtutem pervenire potest?*"—Is there any man of any country in the world who by the mere guidance of Nature could attain to virtue? CIC. *Leg.*

Both Cicero's and Seneca's sentiments on this subject are contradictory.

"Δεονται ξυναγωνιστου θεου και ξυλληπτορος."—Men stand in need of God as an assistant and cooperator. MAX. TYR. *Diss.* 22.

Simplicius, Maximus Tyrius, Xenophon, and Plato maintain, in the most express terms, the doctrine of divine influence.

* James, iii. 15.

sensual, devilish. Much of the profligacy of manners in the present century is to be attributed to the desertion of the religion of our forefathers, and the teaching of a Christianity which has not the SAVOUR OF LIFE, and was unknown in England at the reformation.

"Earthly, sensual, devilish," are the epithets which the Apostle uses: now let us turn from the written book to the living world. Can any impartial observer deny, without affected candour, that there are many whose conduct deserves these epithets? and can he deny, that they are chiefly among persons who seem to live without God in the world, and to be unbelievers in Revelation, though perhaps conformists to the church? Such persons seem to delight in evil; and, like the being from whom the last of these epithets is taken, to go about, seeking whom they may devour.* No man can be much conversant in any business in the world, especially when there is competition, without meeting with men who hesitate at no falsehood or baseness, and with whom it is never safe to have either conversation or transaction. Plausibly pretending to courteousness, to friendship, to every thing just, right, and amiable, they lie in wait to deceive and to injure. They will do wanton mischief, for its own sake. They will not only demolish the fair fabric of another's happiness, but laugh over the ruins which they have made.

How beneficial would it be for such persons, and for society, if their hearts were renewed by regene-

* Read, in the following description from Scripture, how men once degenerated, when estranged from God.

"So that there reigned in all men, without exception, blood, manslaughter, theft, and dissimulation; corruption, unfaithfulness, tumults, perjury, disquieting of good men, forgetfulness of good turns, defiling of souls, changing of kind, disorder in marriages, adultery, and shameless uncleanness." Wisdom, xiv. 23—29.

rating grace; if they could be persuaded to believe that there really is something more desirable than Mammon; something that contributes more to happiness, and the pleasurable enjoyment of life, than show, equipage, living in the eyes of others, and the indulgence of an unfeeling, self-idolizing vanity, at the expense of truth, justice, mercy, and every thing that gives solid satisfaction and real dignity. The grace of God would even adorn them, make them more estimable and honourable than the longest series of unmeaning titles, the most brilliant gems in a coronet, the most magnificent houses and parks, and most gaily-painted vehicles. It would do more; it would liberalize and soften their hearts, and make them MEN, such as the Creator intended them to be, feelingly alive to the charms of goodness, and to the touch of sympathy. The film* would be removed from their eyes; and while they consulted the peace and happiness of others they would see the things that belong unto their own. The horizon of their mental vision, now all sombrous and cloudy, would be beautifully serene. The stream of their lives, now a desolating torrent, abruptly dashing and foaming over its banks, would flow in its proper channel, smooth and clear, blest and blessing in its course.

Surely every thinking and good-natured mortal, who observes what a despicable and detestable, or rather pitiable object, a man becomes, however elevated his rank and affluent his fortune, when his heart is hardened, and he feels no sentiment of love

* "If the world have got possession, talk no more of your questions, shut your bibles, read no more the word of God to them; worldly affections hinder true understanding of religion."

Bishop TAYLOR.

"Demas," says St. Paul, "hath forsaken me, having loved this present world."

to God, or kindness to his fellow-creatures, must wish to promote, and gladly cooperate with others in promoting, the prevalence of the true spirit of Christianity. This alone, operating by grace, can restore the depraved, fallen, wretched creature, become, by his perverseness, earthly, sensual, devilish, to his proper rank, as a rational and immortal being, and to unspeakable happiness for which he was intended by divine benevolence.

Mine is an humble attempt to promote the prevalence of the true spirit of Christianity. In recommending the doctrine which this book particularly enforces, I know that I am justified by the holy Scriptures,* by the church, by the tenets of the most learned and virtuous of the dissenters, and the greatest divines of this country, who have displayed their abilities either by the press or the pulpit. I claim no merit, but that of endeavouring to rescue the true and most momentous doctrine of the Gospel from the neglect and contempt in which it has been involved, during this century, by false policy and partiality, expressing their rancorous hatred to sects, deemed, at various times, injurious to certain worldly interests and temporary purposes of state. Christianity itself has been wounded by weapons, aimed only at men, whose political sentiments might perhaps be wrong, though their religions were, for the most part, strictly conformable to Scripture,† and beneficial to every community.

* "He who doubts it, quarrels not with our creed, but our grammar; and instead of going to church to be instructed better, he ought to be sent to school." Bp. HICKMAN.

"The pure word of God neither is nor has been the sole criterion of orthodoxy."

† Many who dislike the discipline and communion of our church, firmly adhere to the articles of it.

I confess myself, in this attempt, to be only the pupil of those great masters whose opinions I have copiously cited, that they may be both an ornament and defence to my imperfect manual of CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY. Some of the greatest deceased divines of the church of England, next to the Scriptures, are my chief authority. Happy am I to sit at the feet of such instructors; men, whose learning and abilities were of the first magnitude, and whose piety and goodness of heart seem to have vied, for excellence, with their vigorous understandings, and accurate knowledge of scriptural theology. It is honour enough to be merely instrumental in republishing their salutary doctrines, and giving them the inconsiderable sanction of my public, though single vote. If they were now alive, they would be most anxiously diligent, in the present state of Christianity, in exciting the true spirit of vital and experimental religion. Never was there more occasion for their zeal and activity than now; and it appears to me, that their mode of recommending Christianity was a right mode, because, among other reasons, it has the test of experience in its favour.

The fact is incontrovertible, that in their times it was greatly successful. The true spirit of Christianity, during their ministry of the gospel, mightily grew and prevailed. Infidelity was uncommon and infamous; and the mild, meek, placid temper of the gospel was deemed, even in the highest ranks of society, not only conducive to happiness, but ornamental. Religious grace was valued above all graceful accomplishments. Men gloried in maintaining, openly and consistently, the Christian character;

If some appear to think the husk and shell of more value than the kernel, is there not reason to suppose that they are warped in their judgment of things by some corrupt principle, some narrow, worldly motive?

and the force of truth, not weakened by false politics, made it even a fashion.

I have laboured to revive the principles of those times; not without a hope, that they may have similar success in our day, if duly encouraged by high example. Men are doubtless, now as well as ever, susceptible of religious impressions, if properly enforced on evangelical authority. The times, it is said, are altered; but let it be remembered, that men make the times, and that men are very much modelled by books and all public instruction.

It is certainly unwise, in the present adverse circumstances of Christendom, to neglect or discountenance any mode of effectually disseminating and confirming the Christian faith, more especially a mode which like this has in past times been found successful, and is authorized by Scripture.

For myself, I must beg leave to say, what is indeed sufficiently evident, that I have been in search of truth, not of favour or advantage. I have deemed religion lovely enough to be wedded without a dowry. I have had no sinister view, but have employed my hours of leisure in a way which I thought might be most beneficial to my fellow-creatures and my country. If I am wrong in my doctrine; if my great masters have instructed me erroneously, I am open to conviction, and shall rejoice to be better informed. I will say, with the poet, addressing the *Father of Lights*,

> "If I am right, thy GRACE impart,
> Still in the right to stay;
> If I am wrong, O teach my HEART
> To find that better way."

In the mean time, I make this offering to my fellow-mortals, labouring, like myself, in pursuit of happiness, though, many of them, in a different mode; and I dedicate it, with sincere devotion, to TRUTH, PIETY, AND PEACE.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

Cursory Remarks on one or two Objections in Mr. Paine's last Pamphlet, against the Authenticity of the Gospel.

It is much against my opinion of propriety to recommend to public notice the writings of infidels, by animadverting upon them; it is still more so, to quote their cavils, though with an intent to refute them. What is this, indeed, but to contribute to the dissemination of their errors, while it gratifies their vanity? Mr. Gibbon avowed that fame was his object; and it may be suspected, that the greater part of sceptical or infidel writers are pleased with those answers and refutations, which, though they are meant to discountenance them, yet do, in fact, contribute, more than any thing else, to their publicity, notoriety, or, as they may conceive, to their glory.

But with respect to Mr. Paine, his notoriety is already so great, as scarcely to admit of increase; and there is too much reason to fear, that his infidel writings will attract general notice, at least among the lower classes, without any aid from controversial opposition. I think, therefore, I shall do no harm, if, unfortunately, I should do no good, by making one or two remarks on his recent attack on Christianity.

Mr. Paine is supposed, by his partisans, to have laid the axe to the root of revealed religion. His blows, indeed, are violent; but they miss their aim.

His weapon is blunted and repelled, by striking against a solid substance. Many such strokes have, at various times, been levelled at Christianity; but the hardy tree, rooted deeply in the hearts of men, and watered by the dews of Heaven, has vegetated with fresh vigour, and, after the operation of lopping, diffused its branches with additional luxuriance.

In Mr. Paine's theological works there is, indeed, little novelty. His objections have been frequently considered, and, for the most part, removed. They are, however, new to the young and the unlearned, who seldom possess time, books, or inclination, sufficient to qualify them as judges of their solidity. Mr. Paine's political opinions contribute much to recommend, among many, his theological; and thus party zeal is unfortunately excited in favour of religious scepticism or actual infidelity. From a variety of causes, peculiar to the present times and circumstances, there is too much reason to apprehend, that Mr. Paine's theological pamphlet is too favourably received; and that it will contribute to diffuse licentiousness, both of principles and practice. It is not from real novelty, or the peculiar ability of the author, but from temporary circumstances, that it will derive its malignant efficacy. I am not presumptuous enough in my own powers, to suppose myself able to counteract it. But I have attempted it throughout this book, not doubting that some of those many learned and ingenious divines, who, by their high situation in the church, enjoy ample leisure, possess extensive libraries, and all other opportunities for information, will step forward to oppose an attack, which tends to undermine the whole fabric of the visible church, and which, if successful, must render their high offices not only super-

fluous, but ridiculous; their dignities not only badges of folly, but, which is worse, of knavish hypocrisy.

Mr. Paine is an additional instance to prove that men, deeply immersed in the affairs of the world, and considering its politics as matters of the first, if not the only importance, usually bring with them dispositions to the study of Christianity, which render them blind to its evidence and excellence. They come with a pride and confidence in their own reason, a state of mind peculiarly offensive to the Sovereign of Heaven, who resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

The kingdom of Christ not being of this world, they view it as aliens, not only with indifference, but disaffection. Indeed, they seldom give themselves the trouble to study, as they ought, the nature of its transcendent polity.

It is an old observation, and confirmed by daily experience, that men are apt to condemn what they do not understand. Mr. Paine, indeed, is not deficient in understanding. He has given indubitable proofs of great sagacity; but his sagacity, applied to religion, is that of the natural man, as the Apostle describes him. There is a spiritual understanding; an understanding irradiated by divine grace, necessary to comprehend the things of the Spirit, without which a man is scarcely better qualified to judge of the gospel, as it is grace and truth, than the blind to decide on the beauty of a picture. He may descant on words and syllables. He may view the letter of the Scriptures as a critic, a logician, an historian; but there is a veil on his heart, which prevents him from perceiving that witness or testimony of the Spirit, which carries conviction, in defiance of all difficulties and obscurities in the letter. The gospel is the ministration of spirit and life, and the power

of God unto salvation. This power of God is not to be limited in its action, to the ability of any man, or set of men, to suggest or answer objections to any particular portions of the Scripture. It shines on, however men may cavil. Like the moon, it continues to illuminate the night, unaffected by the poor ignorant animals who bark at the benign radiance. There is internal evidence in Mr. Paine's pamphlet, that he is unhappily unacquainted with the ministration of the Spirit and the power of God, as it is described in the gospel, and experienced by true believers. He is out of his province, where he treats of theology, and resembles the philosopher of antiquity, who gave lectures to Hannibal on the art of war.

Mr. Paine is not only ignorant of Christianity; he is prejudiced against it. His politics appear to him incompatible with the power of the church; and to undermine the church, he levels his blow at the whole of Christianity. He pierces Christ, to stab the priesthood through his sides.

As the policy of monarchical countries has made the church an ally of the state, he endeavours to weaken the state, by demolishing its ally. Religion in France, corrupted by political artifice, and depraved by superstition, was favourable to slavery. He transfers his hatred from religion so abused, to all religion but Deism. He considers revelation as a mere state contrivance; not aware that the church and kingdom of Christ subsist, independently of all external authority, in the hearts of all true believers, in every clime, united by the Holy Ghost, under their king and priest, Jesus Christ. The living temple of the human heart would still stand, if all the temples of stone, in the violent and wicked contentions of politicians, were demolished and swept

away with the besom of destruction. The whole legions of France, supposing them united under the banners of Mr. Paine, (and I am far from thinking that the whole of that nation, or even a majority, would enlist in the cause of infidelity,) would be unable to destroy this temple, not made with hands, not cemented with mortar, but with the Spirit of holiness and love. But Mr. Paine's prejudice against local churches, (all which have been corrupted,) leads him, most unjustly and unphilosophically, to hate the truly catholic invisible church, which is far above the politics of this world, and too pure to admit the abuses introduced by despotism and knavery imposing upon folly.

Mr. Paine takes what has been called "a short method," with the Christians, or supporters of Christianity. He goes through and explodes the whole of the Old and New Testament, in the pages of a trivial pamphlet. My limits will not, at present, suffer me to enter on the objections which he makes to the Old Testament.

I am more particularly concerned, as indeed are all Christians, with the New Testament: and not so much with the letter, as with the spirit. Mr. Paine's cavils against the letter have been often made, and well refuted. I beg the reader, who is not firmly settled in the faith by better evidence than any human learning can afford, to study with attention adequate to the important subject, Dr. Townson and Dr. Lardner on the Gospels, and Mr. West on the Resurrection.* He will conclude, from a persual of their excellent books, that there is cause sufficient for every pious, humble man to give his full assent to all the essential parts of the Gospel history

* Dr. Trapp on the Gospels, is a very useful book for the unlearned.

to be rooted in faith, to rest in hope, and to abound in charity. Let him wish Mr. Paine a better mind, and then suffer his books to take their natural course, as many of the same kind have done, to the gulf of oblivion.

I shall advert only to one or two principal objections made by Mr. Paine, leaving the rest to those who excel and delight in critical theology. From the specimen I give, I mean no more than that the young or unlearned reader should see that Mr. Paine is not yet entitled to the epithet bestowed on one of the schoolmen, that of IRREFRAGABILIS, or the UNANSWERABLE.

I pass by the indecency and blasphemy of the introductory objections which he makes to the New Testament, with a contemptuous silence. All that is advanced on this occasion, has been well considered and answered, long before Mr. Paine was brought into existence.

I refer the reader to Dr. TOWNSON, for a satisfactory account of the difference in the genealogies of Christ, as given by St. Matthew and St. Luke; though I shall have occasion to mention them presently. In the mean time, I proceed to the general objection. The general objection to the credibility of the Gospel history is made by Mr. Paine in the following words:

"The presumption is," says he, "that the books called the Evangelists, and ascribed to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, were not written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and that they are impositions. The disordered state of the history, in these few books, the silence of one book upon matters related in another, and the disagreement that is to be found among them, implies that they are the productions of some unconnected individuals, many years after the things they pretend to relate; each of

whom made his own legend; and not the writings of men, living intimately together, as the men called the Apostles are supposed to have done; in fine, that they are manufactured, as the books of the Old Testament have been, by other persons than those whose names they bear."

This paragraph evinces Mr. Paine's ignorance of the dates of the Gospels' publication, the particular occasions on which they were written, and the peculiar scope or purpose of each writer, It is an allowed truth, that all the Evangelists wrote a considerable time after the ascension of our Saviour, at different periods, for different purposes, from different places, to different descriptions of men; all which the reader may see well explained in Dr. TOWNSON'S Discourses on the Gospel.

But for the sake of readers busily engaged in the world, who may not have read, or be inclined to read, Dr. Townson's, or other books on the subject, I will submit a few considerations, which, I think, will remove this general objection, which arises chiefly from "the silence of one book upon matters related in the other."

The Times and Places of writing the Four Gospels were as follows:

Gospels.	Place.	From our Lord's Ascension.
St. Matthew's - - - - -	Judea, - - - - - -	64 yrs.
St. Mark's, - - - - - -	Rome, - - - - - - -	64
St. Luke's, - - - - - -	Greece, - - - - - -	64
St. John's, - - - - - -	Ephesus, - - - - -	68
Or, according to Dr. Owen,		
St. Matthew's, - - - -	Jerusalem, *for the use of the Jewish converts*, - - - - - - - -	38
St. Luke's, - - - - - -	Corinth, *for the use of the Gentile converts*, - - - - - - -	53

Gospels.	Place.	From our Lord's Ascension.
St. Mark's,	Rome, *for the use of Christians at large,*	63
St. John's,	Ephesus, *to confute the heresy of* CERINTHUS,	69

The times of writing are differently given by the learned Dr. Mill, in his Prolegomena to the New Testament: thus,

	From the Ascension.
St. Matthew wrote	61
St. Mark,	63
St. Luke,	64
St. John,	97

Each of the Evangelists had a particular view or intention in writing his Gospel history; at the same time that he calculated it for general information in all ages of militant Christianity.

By the way, I must observe, that the distance of time, from our Lord's ascension, to the writing of the Gospels, (erroneously stated by Dr. Watts, in the quotation from him in the preceding pages,) furnishes me with an argument in favour of my main doctrine. During sixty, seventy, or perhaps nearly a hundred years, Christianity flourished without the assistance of any written Gospel. This must have been by the Spirit's immediate influence. It does not appear, that when the Apostolical Epistles were written, any of the Gospels, which we now have, were extant or known. They are not mentioned, nor is there any allusion to them, in the Epistles. Yet it is clear from the Epistles, that there were large churches or societies of Christians—without a written Gospel—except that which was written on the heart of the humble believer by the Spirit's ministration.

To return to Mr. Paine's objection, concerning the *"silence of one Gospel on matters related in another."*

This will not appear at all wonderful, when it is considered, that St. Matthew wrote to the Jews only; St. Mark, (under the dictation of St. Peter,) to all Christians; St. Luke, to the gentile converts; St. John, to certain heretics, who denied the preexistence and divinity of Christ; and that they wrote at very distant places, and at very different times, under circumstances probably no less various. But to be a little more particular. St. Matthew wrote at Jerusalem, to the Jews only; those, I mean, of the Jews, who were converted to Christianity. As they lived near the scene of action, and many of them had probably observed our Saviour, and heard his discourses, he omitted many things, as well known to them, and mentioned others with a conciseness which he would not have approved, had he been writing to foreigners, or persons totally unacquainted with the subjects of his history. The other Evangelists very properly vary from him in explaining what he left less distinct, in expatiating where he observes a brevity, in adding what he omitted; as was reasonable, since they wrote considerably after him, and to persons, who, it must be supposed, were unacquainted with the customs, the language, and even the country of Judea.

If it be asked, what becomes of the inspiration of the Gospels, if the writers thus conducted them according to the rules of human prudence? I answer, in the words of Dr. Townson, "The Holy Spirit sanctified their hearts with a lively and powerful sense of spiritual things; enlightened their minds with a just knowledge of the truth; and endued them with wisdom, (or prudence,) to relate the life of Christ in a manner becoming the subject, and

suitable to their several designs: and these gifts, which exalted the natural powers of their minds, without destroying them, would produce verity and propriety, but not identity of relation." They reported such words and deeds, as conduced to the purpose of converting or establishing the persons whom they immediately addressed; while the Spirit of God took care that the whole of their history, as contained in four narratives, should convey information sufficient, in all necessary points, not only for their own age, but for all ages of Christianity.

"They vary," says the objector, "and therefore they cannot be true and faithful narrators."* But in what do they vary? Does one of them say that our Saviour rose from the dead; and the other, that he did not? Do they vary in any important point of doctrine? No: but they vary in a few historical circumstances, which affect not the main purpose in the smallest degree. Their variations in non-essentials, and their agreement in essentials, is a mark of veracity. Their variations prove that they did not write in concert, or with a design to deceive; for if they had, they would have taken care to have avoided what would expose them immediately to the objections of their opponents; and their agreement in essentials, in the grand purpose of showing that Man was to be favoured with the Holy Spirit, is a proof that Providence superintended them; and that they were so strongly convinced of this truth, and had it so present to their minds, that they could not possibly omit it, or vary in it, however else they might vary.

Theophylact says, very sensibly, Δι' αυτο τουτο μαλλον

* "*Neque enim continuo vacillat totius scripturæ auctoritas, sicuti* variet *vel in verbis vel in sensu. Spiritus ille Divinus, mentium apostolicarum moderator, passus est suos* ignorare *quædam et* LABI."

ERASMUS in Matt. ii. 6.

αληθευουσιν, οτι μη κατα παντα ωμοφωνησαν. ενομιθησαν γαρ αν, οτι συγκαθισαντες αλληλοις και συμβουλευσαμενοι, εγραψαν. νυν δε ο παρελειψεν ουτος, εγραψεν εκεινος· και δια τουτο, δοκουσιν εν τισιν διαλλαττειν.* "On this very account," says Theophylact, "they may be more easily believed to have spoken the truth, because they do not every where speak alike; for if they had, they would have been supposed to have written in collusion: but, as the case is now, what one is silent upon, another has written; and, therefore, they appear in some things to differ;" but they differ εν τοις ελαχιστοις, in very minute things—as he had just before observed. Still keeping in mind, that Mr. Paine's chief objection is, "the silence of one book (of the Gospel) upon matters related in the other," let us now proceed to St. Mark.

St Mark's Gospel was dictated by St. Peter, who was acquainted with St. Matthew's. It was in many things anticipated by St Matthew. It was published in Italy, perhaps at Rome, and addressed to Christians in general; but particularly to the new converts, both pagan and Jewish. Some of them might have already seen St. Matthew's Gospel, and all of them might hereafter see it; and therefore St. Mark is silent on many precepts and parables, as being already known from the narrative of his predecessor. In some matters, St. Mark explains and describes more fully than St. Matthew, because he addressed himself in part to the Gentiles, who could not know so well as the Jews, to whom alone St. Matthew wrote, what related to the Jewish language, customs, scriptures, or topography. When he repeats, which is very often, for very good reasons, what St. Matthew has told, he adds some circumstance of explanation, necessary to the Gentiles, that is, to foreigners, who were very little acquainted with either the country

* Theophylact. *Proœm. in Matt. Evangelium.*

or the inhabitants of Jerusalem. It was necessary to repeat many facts related by St. Matthew, because, in that age, the art of printing being unknown, and copies of the Gospels very difficult to be procured, especially by the poor, it must, in the nature of things, have happened frequently, that the persons for whom St. Mark wrote, Jews at a great distance from Judea, and pagans, (both newly converted,) had never had a sight of St. Matthew's Gospel. Very difficult must it have been, in those days, to have sent many copies from Jerusalem to Rome, even if many existed, and if the converts near Jerusalem had not demanded all that could be multiplied by the slow process of the hand-writing. St. Mark's narrative is therefore nearly the same as St. Matthew's, with the addition of such matters as might be necessary to the persons immediately addressed, and the omission of other matters which were either not essential, or, if they were, might be learned from St Matthew's Gospel, already published.

St. Mark, it has been already said, is supposed to have written under the entire direction, or rather the dictation, of St. Peter; and it is observable, that St. Peter is represented as present at all the actions and sayings of our Lord recorded in this Gospel. And this circumstance will account for St. Mark's "silence on some matters related by the other Evangelists." The narrative of St. Mark seems to be restricted, in great measure, to such transactions as St. Peter was present at; which, while it adds to the authenticity of the narrative, accounts for the omission of deeds or words, at which St. Peter was not present, and thus obviates Mr. Paine's objection.

St. Luke's Gospel was designed for the Gentiles

only. Of this there is much internal evidence. He studiously avoids Hebrew words, and uses, wherever it can be done, Greek terms, to express the ideas of the Hebrew.* And there is one most striking particular in St. Luke, which arose from his addressing the Gentiles only. The fine parable of the Prodigal, to be found in none other of the Gospels, was admitted by St. Luke, because it conveyed a doctrine highly encouraging to the Gentile, who was that younger son, returned, at last, to his father, and received with affection. St. Matthew is silent upon this parable, because writing, as he did, to the Jews, he knew, especially at that earlier period when he wrote, that it would not be agreeable to their narrow prejudices, and their ideas of exclusive salvation. St. Mark and St. John are silent upon it, because it was not necessary to their purposes.

St. Luke's genealogy of Christ differs much from St. Matthew's; and Mr. Paine triumphs greatly on the difference.† But let it be duly noticed, that St. Matthew, writing to the Jews only, was contented with tracing the genealogy of the Messiah, for their satisfaction, up to David and Abraham; while St. Luke, writing to the Gentiles, traced it up to Adam, the father of all mankind, Gentile as well as Jew; thus encouraging the Gentiles, by making it appear that they, as descendants of Adam, were also related to the Messiah, as well as the Jews.

Another remarkable circumstance in St. Luke, evinces that the Evangelists adapted their narratives, as wisdom directed, to the particular descriptions of persons to whom they were immediately addressed. St. Luke mentions the name of the Roman emperors

* Whether St. Matthew uses the Hebrew word, *Amen*, St. Luke renders it by the Greek *ναι*, xi. 51. and *αληθως*, ix. 27.

† See Trapp on the Gospels.

that reigned when Christ was born, and when himself began to preach. It was the practice of the Gentiles to mark the era of events by the reigning emperor. St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. John, observe a silence concerning the reigning emperor. It did not appear to them necessary or expedient to use this mode of dating events, when writing to Jews, or persons acquainted with Judea and its history.

Let it be attended to, that there were in circulation, before some of the Gospels were written, a great many narratives (διηγησεις) of our Saviour's life and death, by unknown authors, which being read in certain parts, might render it unnecessary to dwell on some particulars which they might have recorded with truth and accuracy. It has long been my opinion, (but I offer it with the diffidence of one who ventures a conjecture,) that the four Gospels which we now have, were written to supply the defects, correct the errors, and give confirmation to the truths, which appeared in these popular narratives, at which St. Luke seems to hint in the very entrance or introduction to his Gospel. St. Luke, when he says, that *many had taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed by us*, speaks not of St. Matthew or St. Mark by name. He gives them no preference. He could not mean by many, two only. He probably meant the ΔΙΗΓΗΣΕΙΣ* above-mentioned,

* There were many διηγησεις (narratives) and παραδοσεις (traditions.) But there were two very celebrated, and called Gospels; the one, according to the Hebrews; the other, according to the Ægyptians. These were a collection of facts and sayings, collected from oral tradition. The first maintained its credit long after the publication of the four Evangelists, and was a favourite Gospel. It was read in the church during three hundred years. Some think, and I subscribe to their opinion, that this was the original Hebrew of St. Matthew. But arguments are not wanting to prove that it

which he seems to censure for inaccuracy. It would be highly credible, (if we had not information,) that there were narratives handed about of merely human composition. Such events as had happened in Judea must have excited curiosity; and the pleasure of relating extraordinary events naturally prompted men to gratify it. Gospel histories, therefore, abounded.* The Gospels of the four Evangelists were varied, according as the necessity which appeared to exist from the errors, the defects, or misrepresentations of the διηγησεις, or narratives, which were circulated among the persons to whom the four Evangelists wrote, seemed to require.

But to proceed to St. John. He wrote many years after St Matthew. The history of Christ, at near a hundred years after his ascension, was probably pretty well known by the Gospels, and the common narratives, called διηγησεις and παραδοσεις. He wrote chiefly to correct mistakes in doctrine; giving at the same time a narrative for the use of those who might still be uninformed in the history. He wrote against a heresy. He had to set men right as to the dignity of Christ. Therefore there are many things in his Gospel on which the others are silent; and he, on the other hand, is silent on many things, because repetition of what they had given the world would have been either of little use, or quite superfluous, to the persons whom he immediately addressed.

By thus fairly considering the different times, places, persons, and other circumstances, in which

was another.—See this very curious subject discussed in Millii *Proleg.*

* Mr. Toland, in his Amyntor, names eighty books which he thinks have as good a right to be admitted into the Canon as those which already appear there.

See Jones on the Canon of the New Testament, vol. i. *p.* 5.

the several Gospels were written, we shall not be at a loss to account rationally, and to the satisfaction of every good mind, for omissions, variations, and additions, in the evangelical histories; and the cavils of unbelievers will never, it is to be hoped, prevail upon serious, humble Christians, who love truth, and seek it with simplicity of heart, unbiassed by politics, or worldly motives, to renounce the written word, much less the Spirit of Christianity.

But though the written word were proved to contain many marks of human infirmity, lapses of memory, and errors of judgment, yet the good Christian, having the witness in himself, would go on his way rejoicing, hoping, and believing to the end. If no other event had been announced in the written word, than that (agreeably to general and uniform tradition) the Holy Ghost was sent to reside among men, after our Lord's ascension, this alone would be glad tidings, or an *evangelium* sufficient to make him exult in the name and privileges of a Christian. If the four Gospels are uninspired, yet the writers, as good men and firm believers, were certainly under the ordinary influence of the Holy Spirit, and related the truth as exactly as their abilities qualified them for narration. They had, most evidently, no intention to deceive. Impostors could never have written with such simplicity. So that though their histories should be found not quite exempt from human errors, as no other history ever was exempt, yet still the main point of revelation is clear. The gift of the Spirit is announced by them. It has in all ages of the church been experienced; and though all the books in the world were destroyed, it would remain. The tradition is now too extensive to be ever lost. And what mortal, who, as the poet says, comes into the world "just to look about him and to

die," will presume to say, that the Eternal God cannot make his will known to man, by constant and immediate revelation, without the aid of the penman or the printer? Disputants, indeed, contending for praise and preferment, will wrangle on this, and all other points; but while they wrangle, the humble Christian believes, and is happy.

There are two particulars of variation, which Mr. Paine lays great stress upon, and which, therefore, I shall take under consideration.

First, "Not any of these writers," says he, "agree in reciting exactly the written inscription, short as it is, which they tell us was put over Christ when he was crucified. Matthew says it was, *This is Jesus, the King of the Jews;* Mark, *The King of the Jews;* Luke, *This is the King of the Jews;* John, *Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.*"

This objection has no more claim to novelty than importance; and I only consider it, to show the unlearned reader how easily it may be obviated. Let him conclude from this, as he may fairly do, that most of Mr. Paine's objections, however plausible, may, upon impartial examination, be removed.

The words on the cross were in three languages; Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. St. Matthew, writing to the Hebrews, probably selected that which was in their own language, in which the word JESUS signifies a Saviour. As this was intended to be read by the Jews, it might be designed, by Pilate's advisers, to heighten the insult and mockery, by calling Christ a Saviour, as well as a king: in Hebrew, it certainly admitted of that interpretation, while it also stood for a proper name.

St. Mark, writing at Rome, purposely selected the LATIN words.—Latin was Pontius Pilate's own language; and he, probably, as it is well known

was the case with the Romans, prided himself in not using any other language than his own; so he omits, in this inscription, which being Latin, may be supposed to be of his own dictation, the Hebrew words *Jesus* and *Nazareth*, and inserts, consistently with the usual brevity of Latin inscriptions, Rex Judæorum—the King of the Jews.—Indeed the words, *This is*, were in course understood, and might be supplied by the Evangelists; but they were inserted by St. Matthew, and were common to all the inscriptions. St. Luke, like St. Mark, took his from the Latin, *Rex Judæorum*.

St. John's is probably from the Greek inscription. And he says, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews," which, there is no doubt, was an exact translation of the Greek words. He says, addressing foreigners, as the inscription itself also did, "Jesus of *Nazareth*." The word Jesus would not convey the idea of a Saviour to the Greeks; it was to them only a proper name, therefore he adds the *Nazarene*, or "of Nazareth," as a matter of historical information. The Jews knew the native place of Jesus, but the Greeks did not, as Nazareth was an inconsiderable town. This addition might be intended as a mark of contempt, and to show the Greeks, or foreigners in general, that the Jews disdained a king who originated from so paltry a place as Nazareth. Nathaniel's question in St. John is, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Thus it appears, that the inscription being in three different languages, might, for very good reasons, in the opinion of those who placed it over the cross, have some variations adapted to the various readers, and consistent with the views of the various writers.

Mr. Paine adds, that "Mark says, Christ was crucified at the third hour—nine in the morning; and

John says, it was the sixth hour—twelve at noon." Here a note is added in the margin; "According to St. John, sentence was not passed till the sixth hour, (noon,) and consequently the execution could not be till the afternoon; but Mark says expressly, he was crucified at the third hour—nine in the morning."

Here certainly is a difficulty; but the learned have informed us that St. John parted the days as we do, at midnight,* contrary both to the Roman and Jewish custom; the sixth hour, therefore, is not noon, but six o'clock in the morning, when sentence was passed; and various circumstances might take place, added to the slowness of the procession, to retard the execution till nine, the very time fixed by St. Mark. St. John's method of dividing the day was not Jewish or Roman, as it has been said, but Asiatic. St. John either learned or taught this method in Asia Minor, where were seven churches, which differed from others in the time of keeping Easter; and which affirmed, that they followed, in this variation of times and seasons, the institution of St. John; a circumstance which is very material, as it shows that St. John had turned his attention to the regulation of time.

Dr. Townson, to whom every student of the literal gospel is much indebted, advances other arguments on this head, for which I refer to his discourses.

It is inconsistent with my ideas of propriety to quote many of Mr. Paine's objections;† and indeed my limits will not admit a full examination of his book, if I were inclined to go through it, or, on the present occasion, thought it necessary.

In answer to what Mr. Paine has said against

* According to the *Nuchthemeron.*

† I would not cull the flowers of those weeds, whose roots I wish to destroy.

that part of the evangelical history which relates to the interment, resurrection, and ascension of our Saviour, I refer the reader to another volume of Dr. Townson's, expressly written on these subjects, if any one thinks it necessary to reconsider them on account of Mr. Paine's objections. My opinion is, that they who have the witness of the Spirit will not be at all concerned about Mr. Paine's cavils, except from the benevolent motive of endeavouring to prevent their ill effect on the thoughtless and malignant part of mankind, who may be confirmed in their neglect or hatred of Christianity, by his virulent invective against it.

Those who believe, not only with an historical faith, but with the FAITH THAT GOD GIVETH; not only in the letter, written on perishable materials, but also, in the Spirit, the everlasting Gospel of immediate grace, will not be in the least danger of wavering, even if the infidels could prove that the Scriptures are merely human narratives, with the errors of humanity.

It is presumptuously said by Hosius, bishop of Warmia in Poland, "We have now bid adieu to the Scriptures, having seen so many, not only different, but contrary interpretations of them. Let us rather hear God himself speak, than apply ourselves, or trust our salvation, to those jejune elements. There is no need," he proceeds, "of being skilful in the law and the Scriptures, but of being taught of God. That labour is ill employed," says the prelate, "that is bestowed on the Scriptures; for the Scripture is a creature, and a beggarly element." Far be it from us to think so. Christ commanded his immediate hearers to search the Scriptures; and St. Paul says, "they are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the

man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works;" that is, they are profitable, or conducive to the improvement of us in morality, as well as in the true doctrine. But although we cannot say what Hosius erroneously said; yet we may say, because the Scripture says it, "God's grace is sufficient for us"—his grace mediately afforded by his word, and immediately by his actual influence; and having the teaching of God, we shall not renounce our faith, though the Chubbs and the Paines should find matter for censure or ridicule in all the written books, from Genesis to the Apocalypse. Faith, we read and know, is the gift of God; and he it is who worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

"The word," says Dr. Ridley, "has not power of itself to work, in our understandings, a faith in God, nor to influence the will to a repentance from dead works, without the Holy Ghost."

But he in whom the Holy Ghost has worked a faith in God, and whose will the Holy Ghost has influenced to repentance from dead works, may stand fast in the faith, rooted and established, in defiance of all that has been said by men engrossed by this world, and possessing its wisdom; men who have arisen in almost every age, and confirmed the Christian doctrine, by promoting its discussion, and awakening Christians from the slumber of security.

"When," says Dr. Watts, "we are attacked with argument to baffle our faith, and when false doctrines blow strong, and carry away many, how shall we be able to stand our ground, and hold fast our faith in Christ, if we have not the inward witness, the beginning of eternal life? Therefore it is that so many Christians waver and are led away, because

they feel so little of the efficacy of the Holy Ghost in their hearts."

If this then be the cause of wavering and falling away from Christ, I hope the believers in Christianity, and lovers of their fellow-creatures, will second, by their own endeavours, this attempt of mine, to promote the prevalence of a belief in the energy of the Holy Ghost. The attempt, in an age like this, must be exposed to calumny and opposition. But every thing is to be borne with patience, in the cause of God and man.

Mr. Paine professes to be a believer in God, and a friend to man. It is, indeed, astonishing, that an advocate for the rights of man should set his face against the gospel of Jesus Christ; for it is certain that the gospel is the book, of all that were ever written, that favours most the rights of man, and the cause of equal liberty. Jesus Christ abolished slavery in Europe. Jesus Christ has humbled the rich and mighty. Jesus Christ has given a consequence to the poor,* which they never possessed amid the

* The New Testament abounds with passages, expressive of indignation against those among rich men, who abuse wealth and power, for the purposes of oppression, cruelty, and despotism. As a specimen, I quote the following from the Epistle of St. James:

"Go to, now, ye rich men; weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you.

"Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.

"Your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire: ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.

"Behold the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them that have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.

"Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter:

"Ye have condemned and killed the just." James, v. 1—6.

boasted freedom of Greece and Rome. Jesus Christ has done more to destroy the insolent distinctions which arose from the spirit of tyranny, than was ever done before or after him; and Jesus Christ suffered death for this benefaction to all mankind, as a seditious innovator, and an enemy to Cæsar. Jesus Christ is therefore entitled to the gratitude and veneration of every friend to truth, justice, and humanity, even if he were no more than a man, and his religion untrue. What have Sydney, Hampden, Locke, done or said, with such effect, in the cause of liberty, and in favour of the mass of mankind, as Jesus Christ? Let then all the friends of liberty and man be lovers of Jesus Christ; and let not their zeal for reforming the corruptions of Christianity (caused by statesmen, wishing to render it subservient to political views) lead them to renounce the comfortable and liberal doctrines of the genuine gospel.

The gospel recommends peace, and infallibly produces, by the Spirit's benign influence, such dispositions of mind, as must of necessity, if they were to prevail among the rulers of the world, put an end to all offensive war. It has not yet done so, for it has not yet sufficiently prevailed among the rulers of the world. But it has certainly softened the rigours of war; a favourable presage of its future efficacy, in totally abolishing it.

I wish Mr. Paine, as a politician and a philanthropist, if he be such, not to oppugn the great promoter of peace and liberty. As a fellow man, (I wish I could add, a fellow Christian,) I warn him, from the kindest motives, to beware lest he be guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.

Mr. Paine himself says, "The great trait in the character of Jesus Christ is philanthropy." Why should Mr. Paine, then oppose the prevalence of his

benign doctrines? Christianity is a friend to order, but an enemy to despotism of every kind and degree. Why should Mr. Paine, then, join with the wicked despots of the earth, in the endeavour to exterminate Christianity? The late King of Prussia, the greatest despot and butcher of mankind, was the prince of the unbelievers. He made infidelity a fashion in France; and behold the consequences! May they never extend to this country; where, God grant that liberty may continue unimpaired by despotism or licentiousness; and religion flourish, uncorrupted by hypocrisy or superstition, and unshaken by the assaults of infidelity!

No. II.

ΩΔΑΙ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙΚΑΙ.—*Songs dictated or inspired by the Holy Spirit.* EPH. v. 19.

THE neglect of psalmody, in the congregations at large, has contributed very much to damp the ardour of devotion, and, consequently, to cause an indifference to the Christian religion. Less of instrumental, and more of vocal music, (in which all the people should unite with heart and voice,) would conduce greatly to the revival of decayed piety. It would render our religious assemblies interesting, where they are now cold, and merely formal.

Psalmody, it is well known, is confined, in the greater part of country churches, to a few, and is become a matter of mere amusement, both to the hearers and performers. To many, it is tedious and disgustful.

The whole congregation, women and children, as well as men, should sing simple tunes, such as are easily learned, and, at the same time, deeply affect

the heart, while they please the ear. The instrument should not be so loud as to drown the voices. An organ, under the hands of an ambitious player, usually overcomes the melody of the voice, and grates discord on the ear of piety.

When all join, to the best of their power, in singing well-composed hymns, all must be affected; and psalmody will, like prayer, become a powerful means of grace. As it is now conducted, religion seems to have little or no concern with it. Some of the congregation sit with indifference or impatience; others divert themselves, as well as they can, with observing the grimaces of the singers; while one or two, amateurs and practitioners of music, lend an ear, as critics on the skill of the performers.

The soft and sweet melody, in some of the places of religious worship frequented by various dissenting congregations in London, is delightful to an uncorrupted ear, while it warms the heart with devotion, meliorates the disposition, and leaves the mind full of pious sentiments to God, and charitable affections to man. As far as I am able to judge, psalmody, in the church of England, requires a complete and immediate reformation.

The Apostle says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."*

Is this addressed only to ten or twelve persons in every congregation? Certainly it is addressed to all Christians; and there is no doubt but that Christianity would flourish more if due attention were paid to psalmody. Many who are separated from the established church, are influenced, in their separation,

* Col. iii. 16.

by the efficacious method of deriving grace into their hearts, which they experience in their own assemblies, by the pleasing, melting strains of holy harmony.

No. III.

THE following is a short list of books, recommended to the choice of persons who are not professional students in divinity, but who, occupied in worldly business, read, in the intervals, for the sake of improvement in piety and morality. It is not expected that such persons should procure all which are here mentioned, but select those which they may best approve, or most conveniently obtain. Doubtless there are many more which might be recommended; but, considering for whom the books are designed, I am unwilling to enlarge the collection beyond reasonable limits. I have arranged them alphabetically.

Barrow's Works.
Baxter's Works.
Beveridge's Private Thoughts.
Butler's Analogy.
Collyer's Sacred Interpreter.
Derham's Physico-Theology.
Doddridge's Rise and Progress.
———— Family Expositor.
———— Lectures.
Earle on the Sacrament.
Edwards's (John, of Cambridge) Works.
Gastrell's Institutes.
———— Certainty and Necessity of Religion in general.
———— Certainty of the Christian Revelation.
Gibson's Family Devotions.
Gray's Key to the Old Testament.

Hale's Contemplations.
Hammond's Practical Catechism.
Horne's Commentary on the Psalms.
Kenn's Manual for Winchester Scholars.
Kettlewell's Works.
Lowth's Directions for reading the Scriptures.
Lucas's Inquiry after Happiness.
Nelson's Works.
Norris's Works.
Ostervald's Corruptions of Christianity.
Owen's (Dr. John) Works.
Patrick's Works.
Pelling's Works.
Scott's Christian Life.
Smith's (John) Select Discourses.
Spinckes's Devotions.
Stanhope's Thomas a Kempis.
Talbot's (Mrs.) Devotional Pieces.
Taylor's (Bishop) Works.
Trapp's Discourses on the Gospel.
Watts's Works.
Wilson's (Bishop) Works.
Waterland's Works—if any choose to enter into learned disquisitions on points of controverted doctrine.

No. IV.

I DO not advise a true Christian to enlist himself under any of the celebrated system-makers. Such attachments only tend to make parties in religion, and to destroy charity. The church of England is said to be Calvinistical in its Articles, while the majority of its ministers are Arminians.

Dr. Morley, afterwards Bishop of Winchester,

being asked what the Arminians *held*, pleasantly answered—that they *held*—all the best bishoprics and deaneries in England.

The true follower of Jesus Christ will seek no other appellation than that of Christian. He will select the true doctrine, wherever he can find it, but be bigotted to no NAME under Heaven.

"*Doctrina Christi*," says Erasmus, "*quæ prius nesciebat* ΑΟΓΟΜΑΧΙΑΝ, *cæpit a philosophiæ studiis pendere: hic erat primus gradus ecclesiæ ad deteriora prolabentis.*"—The doctrine of Christ, which at first knew nothing of verbal disputes, began to depend on philosophical studies; this was the first step which the church made in its progressive descent to a state of degeneracy.

On observing the various, and even contradictory tenets of the system-writers and their followers, one is tempted to exclaim with the poet,

"*O Cecita de la terrene menti!*
In qual profonda notte,
In qual fosca caligine d'errore
Son le nostr' alme immerse
Quando tu non le illustri, O SOMMO SOLE!
A che del saper vostro
Insuperbite, O MISERI MORTALI?
Questa parte di noi, che 'ntende, e vede,
Non è nostra virtu, ma vien dal CIELO."

O blindness of our earth-incrusted minds!
In what a midnight shade, what sombrous clouds
Of error are our souls immersed, when thou,
O Sun supreme! no longer deign'st to shine.
Why of the little knowledge ye attain
Vaunt ye yourselves, poor mortals as ye are,
For that within us which thus thinks and sees,
Not to ourselves we owe: it comes from Heaven.

PASTOR FIDO, Act v. Sc. 6.

CONSIDERATIONS

ON

THE NATURE AND EFFICACY

OF THE

LORD'S SUPPER.

Sane jamdudum mihi visi sunt multi nostrorum sacramentorum vim nimis dilute atque frigide explicare. GROTII EPIST.

PREFACE.

"If the Christian Religion be, indeed, what it declares itself, a Revelation from Heaven; if a chief part of its design be to renovate, to purify, and exalt our nature, how mortifying my disappointment," says a writer, who describes England, under the character of a Chinese traveller, "when I found myself in the midst of a nation, not without noble instances of learning, indeed, and abilities of every kind, but immoral in a high degree, and so uninspired with devotion, that its most glaring characters are indifference or contempt for all religion."

If this account be true, it is alarming even to those who, without pretending to much religion, profess a regard for the welfare of their country; since Machiavel, the oracle of politicians, declares, that there is no surer prognostic of ruin in any state than to see Divine worship neglected or despised.

Let the following observations, quoted by the Chinese, be applied to a neighbouring nation; and to our own also, if the application shall be found proper and useful.

"Youth born and brought up," says the virtuous Bishop Berkley, "in wicked times, without any bias to good from early principle or instilled opinion, when they grow ripe, must be monsters indeed; and it is to be feared the age of monsters is not far off.*

"Whence this impiety springs, by what means it gains ground among us, and how it may be re-

* What were Robespierre, Marat, Carriere, Hebert, Le Bon, &c. &c.?

medied, are matters that deserve the attention of all those who have the power and the will to serve their country. And although many things look like a prelude to some general ruin, although it is much to be apprehended that we shall be worse before we are better, yet who knows what may ensue, if all persons in power would behave themselves like men truly conscious and mindful, that the authority they are clothed with is but a derivative ray from the supreme authority of Heaven? This may not a little contribute to stem that torrent which, from small beginnings, hath grown to such a head, and daily gathers force to such a degree, as threatens a general inundation and destruction of these realms.

"It would be great rashness," says Dr. Hartley, whose ideas coincide with those of the Bishop, "to fix a time for the breaking of the storm that hangs over our heads; as it is blindness and infatuation not to see it; not to be aware that it may break. And yet this infatuation has always attended all falling states. The kingdoms of Judah and Israel, which are the types of the rest; were thus infatuated. And Christendom in general seems ready to assume to itself the place and lot of the Jews, after they had rejected their Messiah. Let no one deceive himself or others. The present circumstances of the world are extraordinary and critical beyond what has ever yet happened."

Both the writers here cited, were men of singular sagacity; and the events that have lately taken place respecting national morals and religion, in countries which used to be called Christendom, prove, that strong reason, assisted by experience and observation, becomes in such men almost prophetic.

That the present calamities of the world are derived from the neglect and contempt of the Christian

religion, is an opinion perfectly consistent with Scripture. That greater than have yet been experienced may be dreaded, from the rejection of the Messiah, (whether practical or speculative,) there is every reason to think, on the supposition that Christianity is true.

In this book I have endeavoured to maintain a due sense of the real dignity and importance of the most solemn act of our worship, and the most sacred rite of our religion. I have been particularly careful to confirm my opinions by the authority of Scripture, and the sanction of pious and learned defenders of the faith, from the earliest ages, to the times in which we live. I have certainly given long and great attention to the subject; and am not without hope that I shall afford some information to those who, for want of leisure, or opportunity, or inclination, have hitherto little considered or understood the nature and efficacy of the Eucharist. If I should be so successful, I shall be rewarded with the satisfaction of knowing that I shall have contributed to the permanent happiness of my fellow-creatures, and the real welfare of my country.

That many persons who pretend to a superior share of the rational faculty, and of, what they call, liberality of sentiment, will be displeased with, or disposed to despise, both the subject and doctrine of my book, I foresee and lament; but I have not so learned Christ, as to be deterred from preaching and teaching what I conceive to be his gospel, by obloquy, misrepresentation, or any other evil. I wish those who oppose salutary truth a better mind; and rest with cheerfulness under the satisfaction arising from a heart, in every doctrine and opinion advanced by me, conscious of universal benevolence.

I must not, in justice to my book, omit to insert

here a testimony in its favour from a Charge of Bishop Horsley; a prelate, who is acknowledged by all parties to have been the ablest and most learned theologist of the times, and to have done honour, by his superior knowledge, to his see, and to episcopacy. The following recommendation of this treatise he delivered to his clergy, and he afterwards published it at their desire.*

"It is with much satisfaction that I recommend to your perusal, a work not long since published upon this sublime subject by a learned divine of this diocese, under the title of 'Considerations on the Nature and Efficacy of the Lord's Supper.' I have requested the reverend author to reduce it to a form and size fit general dispersion among the laity, which I mean to recommend. Meanwhile it highly deserves the attention of the profession, to whose particular use it is perhaps better adapted in its present shape than in one more popular; and it is no inconsiderable monument of the learning and piety of the writer."

I apologize for the introduction of a passage so highly laudatory; but it is admitted with less reluctance, as it gives me an opportunity of mentioning, with respect and gratitude, the name of a most distinguished divine, a kind, frank, generous and manly prelate, who, in consequence of this book, honoured me with his unsolicited friendship and voluntary correspondence.

* Vide page 28, 29, Quarto edit. printed for James Robson, London.

CONSIDERATIONS

ON

THE NATURE AND EFFICACY

OF THE

LORD'S SUPPER.

SECTION I.

INTRODUCTORY.

THERE is reason to believe that the Sacrament of the Lord's supper may be worthily received, and its benefits fully enjoyed, by all persons of good dispositions, though they should not be furnished with clear and precise ideas of its nature. Nevertheless it is desirable, for the sake of avoiding both carelessness and superstition, that right notions of it should be disseminated, if possible, among all classes of the people. This indeed is now become more expedient than ever, since divines of high rank in the church, and of great reputation in letters, have lately employed their talents in detracting from its dignity, and in denying or extenuating its use. Of this conduct, which I cannot but call, in the gentlest terms, imprudent and pernicious, Bishop Hoadly gave the example. No book indeed was ever more completely answered, than the "*Plain Account*" of the Sacrament written by this celebrated prelate. The victory of his opponents was undisputed, and the book condemned to oblivion by the public voice. But its doctrines have been recently

revived, and, by a peculiar mode of publication, obtruded on the notice of the common people. A large volume, filled with dull debate, depreciating the Sacrament, is not likely to be called for by the unlearned: therefore, lest the important discoveries, originally published in such a volume, should remain unnoticed, its essence is extracted by its author, and charitably vended in a pamphlet of few pages, for the accommodation of the poor and needy.*

I engage in no personal controversy. But I express a strong sentiment of disapprobation, that some of the learned, who, as ecclesiastics, were bound to defend the doctrines to which they had solemnly assented, have joined the Socinians in derogating from the most sacred and important rite of our religion. I deplore their error, and, as far as I am able, will counteract its effects. In the progress of my attempt, I shall have occasion to quote some passages from their writings; and, from these it will appear that every faithful member of the church, every sincere believer of Christianity, is bound to discourage, as far as his influence extends, the prevalence of their degrading doctrine. I acquit the writers of all malice. They may be actuated by the love of singularity, they may be secretly inclined to infidelity, they may be disguised enemies of the establishment, of which they are members, and thus endeavour to sap its foundation; but I judge them not: to Heaven are their motives known; be it mine merely to remonstrate against their opinions on the Sacrament, as the opinions of fallible men, doing involuntary mischief from mistake.

The tide of the times runs strongly against every

* See Dr. Bell's Practical Inquiry, price four-pence, an abridgement of his volume on the Sacrament, adapted to poor and pious persons, as a manual or guide to the altar.

thing mysterious in Christianity; and the efforts of these professed friends to it, who endeavour to diffuse among the common people, low ideas of the Sacrament, increase the rapidity of the torrent. Their books are eagerly seized, praised, and laughed at by the Socinian, the sceptic, and the infidel; each of whom rejoices to see his cause promoted by persons whose duty and profession should lead them to oppose it, with weapons furnished from the united armouries of reason and Scripture. Infidelity cannot fail to gain ground, when the constituted guardians of the faith are thus eager to surrender the citadel, without even the formality of a siege. Champions of the church have struck their flag without a summons; and granted lavishly where concession was scarcely demanded.

But it is obvious to observe that, the manners and temper of the age render all the recent endeavours to lower the mysterious rites of the Christian, religion more than ever injurious. Amidst the diffusion of general knowledge, there now prevails a conceited fastidiousness which leads the minds of many, inflated with the pride of superficial attainments, to the rejection or diminution of all ecclesiastical authority. At such a period, nothing is allowed to become venerable by the lapse of time; nothing is secured from assault by the high character of the institutor; all ancient opinions and practices are examined at the bar of private judgment; the reason of every individual is rendered the standard of right reason; and human judgment is presumed to be a criterion of truth, perfect in its kind, and universal in its application.

In science and philosophy, in the business of the world, in the common intercourse of human life, reason is, for the most part a guide sufficiently sure.

But the mysteries of religion are in their nature above reason; and it is a proof of human folly, as well as pride, to demand that the dispensations of the CREATOR should be all explicable by the reason of a CREATURE—of a creature no less limited in his faculties, than in the term of his mortal existence.

If men give up all pretensions to belief of Christianity, they may then indeed assert, consistently with their folly, the omnipotence of human reason; but while they profess the gospel, they must, if they would retain consistency, submit their reason to their religion; for the whole doctrinal part of Christianity is a mystery. Is not the boasted religion of nature also mysterious? Can reason account for creation any more than for redemption.

But I am now to consider, not the general mystery of Christianity, but the particular mystery of the Lord's supper.

The church-men, who, deserting to the Socinian party, endeavour to degrade this mysterious rite, use the three following means in accomplishing their purpose: first, they represent the whole of it as a mere memorial; secondly, they deny or explain away all present benefits annexed to it; and, thirdly, they maintain, either that no preparation is necessary, or, that a slight one is sufficient; such as may be made in the church during the time of celebration, or a few minutes before it.

I shall endeavour to make it appear, that the Eucharist, though a memorial, is, at the same time, much more than a memorial; that its benefits are present and unspeakably great, and that, in order to the reception of its benefits, peculiar care should be taken in the preparation.

SECTION II.

The Sacrament in general, and the word Sacrament in particular, considered.

THE all-wise Governor of the universe, knowing what is in man, and condescending to his infirmities, has not accommodated his holy ordinances to the intellectual improvements of a few only of the human race; but adapted them to the great mass of mortals, immersed in sensual things, prone to acquiesce in mere animal life, and with difficulty perceiving and admitting the pure and exalted truths of religion. The rites which he has instituted are accompanied with sensible images, with objects visible and tangible, in order to conduct the carnal mind, by gentle gradations and in the easiest manner, to the sublimity of a spiritual and celestial state.

For this purpose, he has appointed two Sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's supper, in which the elements of water, bread, and wine, are constituted, under the operation of his Spirit, both signs and means of sanctification and pardon.* In these mysterious institutions something is to be done as well as spoken; some palpable signs are introduced; and the language of actions and signs is a language more impressive and universal than any mode of oral utterance.

The word Sacrament, which distinguishes these holy rites, is certainly not a scriptural term, neither is it classical; for I do not accord with those who

* Efficiunt quod significant. "Sacramentum est sacræ Rei Signum; ita ut imaginem gerat, et causa existat" Heskins, cap. xv. lib. iii. p. 270.

derive it from Sacramentum, the military oath of the Romans. It evidently comes from Sacramentum, as used by the early translators of the Bible, in the edition called the Vulgate, whenever they had occasion to render into Latin the Greek term, Mystery.*

The very name Sacrament implies mystery. In the language of theologists, who, more intent on things than words, did not always study the purest diction of the Augustan age, Sacramentum is adopted as the appropriate name for the holy mysteries of Baptism and the Lord's supper; and accordingly our church, in the Communion Service, announces, "that our Master and only Saviour hath instituted and ordained holy mysteries as pledges of his love,

* In the Vulgate are the following passages, where Sacramentum is used for Arcanum et Mysterium:

	C.	V.
DAN.	2.	18. Ut quærerent misericordiam super sacramento isto.
		30. Sacramentum hoc revelatum est.
		47. Tu potuisti aperire hoc sacramentum.
	4.	6. Omne sacramentum non est impossibile tibi.
EPHES.	1.	9. Ut notum faceret nobis sacramentum voluntatis tuæ.
	3.	3. Notum mihi factum est sacramentum.
		9. Dispensatio sacramenti absconditi a seculis in Deo.
	5.	32. Sacramentum hoc magnum est.
Coloss.	1.	27. Divitias gloriæ sacramenti hujus in gentibus.
1 Tim.	3.	16. Et manifestè magnum est pietatis sacramentum.
Apoc.	1.	10. Sacramentum septem stellarum.

The word Sacramentum is used also in the same signification, that, is, for "secret," and "mystery," in the Vulgate Apochrypha; but in none of these places has it the least reference to the military oath of the Romans. Neither as the name Sacrament been given by the church to the Eucharist, or to Baptism, as signifying an OATH of fidelity.

"These," says Dr. Isaac Barrow, "are called Sacraments for no other reason, than because the most ancient translators of the Bible into Latin, usually rendered the word μυστηριον, Mysterium, by the word Sacramentum."

Tertullian calls the whole of Christianity, "the Sacrament, that is, the Mystery, of the Christian religion."

and for a continual remembrance of his death, to our great and endless comfort."

Of the two Sacraments or Mysteries, it is my present purpose to consider the second; the second in order of time, but the first in importance: I mean the Eucharist; that Sacrament which is occasionally to repair, while life continues, whatever is lost by sin and infirmity, after the initiation of Baptism; and to supply the Christian pilgrim, in his journey through life, along the path of piety; with food for his growth in grace, with medicine for his maladies, and with a never-failing cup of holy consolation.

The Sacrament, for so the Eucharist is usually called by way of eminence, is both in its name and nature a mystery; and, as a mystery, it contains something in it above, though not contrary to, human reason: something supernatural, which can be nothing less than, as the church expresses it, an inward and spiritual grace; the consequence of which must be the pardon of sin.

Sanctification* and the remission of sins are without doubt the greatest favours that a human being can receive, and these are offered in the Eucharist to the worthy receiver, by the Founder of our Religion and the Institutor of this rite. With the lowliest prostration, therefore, of mind and body, man, wretched as he is by nature, ought to approach the holy mystery, and accept the blessings of grace. Not that he is to worship any created thing in performing this

*"Such sanctification carries with it all that the Scriptures reckon among the fruits of the Spirit: as enriching the soul; and likewise, all that concerns the immortalizing of the body, and dismissing the whole man to future glory. All these blessings and privileges are conferred in the Eucharist on them who receive worthily; because the Spirit is conferred in it, who is the fountain of them all, and whose gracious presence supports them."—Dr. Waterland on the Eucharist, p. 378.

solemn act; but that the deepest humility, as well as gratitude, is the proper sentiment of so weak a being, when he prepares to supplicate, according to a rite ordained by his Saviour, for grace and pardon at the throne of the Most High.

Unworthy of the dignity and sanctity of this mysterious rite must be the ideas of all converts to the opinions of Dr. Bell, who teaches, "That the Lord's supper is a rite of the simplest and plainest nature, perfectly intelligible to every capacity;* that it is simply a memorial of our Lord, but more especially of his death and the general purpose for which he died, having no other benefits annexed to the celebration, nor any other evils to the omission of it, than those necessarily attending the celebration or omission of any other positive rite under the Christian dispensation."† The reception of the Lord's supper, according to this teacher, is no more than an act of obedience; the omission, than an act of disobedience. It is, according to him, a mere memorial without present benefits peculiar to it, and therefore ought to be degraded from that high rank in which it has ever been held by the church, and is still, I trust, held by a great majority of Christians in every part of Christendom.

I shall endeavour to maintain the dignity of this Sacrament thus vilified, and to show that present benefits are annexed to it, not merely as to an act of obedience, but as to a holy mystery, by the appointment of Christ, efficacious, in the highest degree, on the soul of man.

* Practical Inquiry, p. 21. † Ibid. p. 34.

SECTION III.

Passages from late Writers, which degrade the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, with Remarks.

To justify my present attempt, I think it right to produce, in the commencement of it, a few passages from some very eminent divines, who have contributed to cause a neglect of the Sacrament by the low and degrading opinion of it which they have published and sanctioned under the authority of high rank and character.

Bishop Pearce, a grave and learned prelate, in a letter to Dr. Waterland, has these words: "You say the Eucharist has graces and blessings annexed to it; whereas, all that I say is, that it may have them conveyed to the worthy receiver, but not annexed to their worthily receiving." Again, "The Eucharist has graces and blessings in common, I think, with other acts of obedience under the gospel, which shows that I did not think these graces annexed to the Eucharist, unless you will suppose that they are annexed to all acts of obedience, which you will not suppose, I believe. The assistance of God's Spirit is promised, in general, to all Christians; and, therefore, I think, that in all acts of religious worship, a devout Christian may expect it; but I cannot see, from any thing that you have advanced, that he has a right or reason to expect, 'That in the Eucharist pardon and grace are annexed to worthy receiving.'"

Dr. Sykes says: "Our Saviour and his Apostles mention no other ends of the Sacrament than these two: to commemorate the death of Christ, and to be

a sign of friendship among Christians; consequently, no other ends can be made of the Lord's supper, without changing its institution, and making it not the Lord's supper, but our own supper." This he says in a little cheap tract, intended for the multitude, and designed to prevent them from expecting present benefits from the Lord's supper.

Another writer, Dr. Thomas Balguy, a man highly preferred in the church, and remarkable for his refusal of the highest preferments of all, affirms, with decisive voice, that "the benefit is future and prospective. Observe," says he, "these benefits are not present, but future. The benefit immediately obtained by the Sacrament, is only the prospect of salvation, (the only grace signified,) forcibly impressed on our minds by this rite."*

Dr. Bell, whose little tract I have had occasion to mention before, gives the following account of the benefits annexed to the Eucharist:†

"All the benefits we are warranted in expecting from this rite, are, first, that approbation of God, which intentional compliance with his will must certainly procure; and, secondly, whatever additional strength our principles may naturally acquire by the celebration of any religious rite itself.

"There neither are, nor can be, any other benefits attending the performance than these; we have not," he proceeds, "any promise, or even the slightest intimation, either from our Lord himself, or any of his Apostles, that the gracious influences of the Spirit are peculiarly conferred upon us on account of the celebration of the Lord's supper."‡

Again he says: "If ever the bread and wine are

* Dr. Balguy, Charge 7.

† Practical Inquiry, pages 17 and 21. ‡ Ibid. page 28.

received, whether by the well, the sick, or the dying, as an appointed means of obtaining the remission of sins; or in any other light than merely as an act of due obedience to a positive command of our Lord, naturally expressive of faith in him, and when seriously performed as naturally conducive to all such dispositions as that faith requires, the participant is deceived, and the rite itself misapplied.*

"THE LORD'S SUPPER IS SIMPLY A MEMORIAL OF OUR LORD."

He sums up all, in his conclusion, by saying, "the Lord's supper is a rite of the simplest and plainest nature, perfectly intelligible to every capacity; and the performance of it is not attended with any other benefits than those we ourselves make it productive of, by its religious influence on our principles and practice."†

If the whole of this account be true, the sentiment it excites is deep regret. Even the sick and dying can no longer expect a last solace from, what they deemed, a certain source of consolation. All those who have kindly, as well as devoutly, kneeled at the bed-side of departing sinners, held out the holy elements, and told them, that on receiving with faith and repentance, their sins would be forgiven, have, according to Dr. Bell, "deceived the poor communicant and misapplied the holy rite." How can this opinion be reconciled to a solemn approbation of the Liturgy?

No longer is the congregation to expect sanctifying grace; the influence of the Holy Spirit, from that solemn service, for which they have prepared with anxious hearts, and from which they were accustomed to return with souls strengthened and refreshed

Nothing mysterious is allowed by this author to

* Page 30. † Page 34.

be contained in the most solemn act of Christian devotion. Every thing is said to be perfectly plain in it, and intelligible to the meanest capacity. Thus all religious awe is at once removed, and the Christian is to go to the Eucharistical table with nearly the same freedom and familiarity as to the meal of which he daily partakes in the family or convivial circle.

There is nothing to induce men to receive the Sacrament, but a positive command, from an obedience to which he who gave it is represented, in the depreciating scheme, as not affording the slightest intimation of any peculiar benefit.

It is a comfortless account. I am convinced it is not the true one; and think myself well employed in endeavouring to recommend those more exalted ideas of the Sacrament, which our forefathers adopted, and which contributed both to their own virtue and happiness, and to the general prevalence of the Christian religion.

SECTION IV.

The Opinion that the Eucharist is a mere Memorial, considered.

Though the opinion of Bishop Hoadly, "that the Sacrament of the Lord's supper is but a mere memorial," has been repeatedly refuted, yet it is said to gain ground, and to be likely to prevail more and more, in an age when the whole of our religion is represented by the sect of self-named rationalists, the modern Socinians, as totally devoid of every thing mysterious.

This notion of the Sacrament is a mere memorial, recommends itself, they argue, by its simplicity. Every body can understand what is meant by an act

of commemoration. The idea is perfectly familiar. We keep a birth-day in our families, and we remember public events in anniversary festivals. To receive the Sacrament as a mere commemorative act, like these in common life, requires no peculiar grace of Christianity, no examination of the heart, no preparatory discipline. The remembrance of a friend at a convivial table, is an act nearly as religious and virtuous as the reception of the Sacrament, according to the ideas of those who affirm that it is nothing more than an act of memory; performed with some formalities indeed, which, however, as far as any benefits to ourselves are to be received, might as well be omitted, if they had not been positively commanded. The extenuators of the Sacrament sometimes suggest a hint that the command to perform this slight service may possibly not extend to us in these days, but might have been confined to the Apostles, to whom it was immediately given by the Institutor. Dr. Bell, whom I am sorry to quote so often, instructs his disciples thus: "Should any one," says he, "be sincerely convinced that the Lord's supper was not instituted for a standing rite of his religion, but merely for the observance of the Apostles themselves who were present at the institution, no punishment whatever will be incurred by him for omitting to celebrate it under this persuasion." This declaration, pronounced with the decision of a legislator, becomes not a weak mortal, when speaking of rewards and punishments to be bestowed by the Almighty: and I do not think it right to suggest to the common people, to whom this little pamphlet is addressed, excuses for neglecting the Sacrament, which, without any assistance, they are ready to fabricate. I venture to say that scarcely one in a thousand, among the unlearned, would ever have thought,

without such a suggestion, that the command to celebrate the Sacrament could have been confined to the Apostles who heard it. May not many other precepts be supposed to concern only those who heard them, as well as this which respects the Sacrament?

The simplicity of the doctrine that the Eucharist is but an act of memory, and the facility of performing that act, may cause the depreciating accounts of the Sacrament to be well received in the busy world, where men think they have something else to do than to bestow much time and thought on the concerns of religion. They who are deeply immersed in the cares of ambition, avarice, or pleasure, may, without any great self-denial, spare a few moments to perform a duty so easy, and of so little moment, as eating bread and drinking wine in an act of commemoration. The most thoughtless of mankind may stop a few moments to pick up straws from the surface of the stream; but they only, who are convinced that there is a pearl beneath, will have resolution to dive to the bottom.

Persons, who are so far deluded as to acquiesce in the straws on the surface, while gold and jewels are attainable by a deeper research, may regret their delusion when they feel themselves, at some future period, totally destitute of the riches of grace. They may have to deplore their confidence in those teachers, who led them to believe that the Eucharist is nothing more than a commemorative rite, requiring no preparation, and followed with no present and appropriate advantage.

If the Holy Communion be a memorial only, then every man, who, without partaking of the bread and wine from the hand of the authorized minister, seriously and devoutly remembers our Saviour's death,

in any place, or at any time, may excuse himself from coming to the table in the church, even on the most solemn occasions, as from a work of superstition and supefluity. Or, if in compliance with a decorous custom, (in what he thinks matter of indifference,) he should sometimes attend it, he will go without hope, and return without consolation.

Is it necessary (the lukewarm and the busy may say) to go to church to eat bread and drink wine, in order to call to remembrance a fact of universal notoriety? Who forgets the death of Cæsar? The death of Christ can never fall from the memory of a man who has read the gospel, or who lives in a land where Christianity is the established religion. The Sacrament, thus lowered from a beneficial mystery to a mere memorial, will scarcely be considered in any other light than as a relique of popery. Among the mass of the people it is already neglected; but if the doctrine taught by distinguished divines, that it is but a ceremony without benefits, should prevail, the neglect of worthy receiving will not be apologized for, as the effect of thoughtlessness, but boldly defended, as displaying a mind superior to all idle and superstitious formality.

This degrading opinion has already been ably confuted; and, in this place, I shall add only one or two considerations on its absurdity; suggested by the learned author of the Divine Legation. He is an accurate reasoner; and I prefer his testimony, on the present occasion, because he was singularly adverse to every thing that bordered on fanaticism. He would not, I think, have maintained the mysterious dignity of the Eucharist, and the beneficial effects which attend it, unless he had been convinced of them by arguments of irresistible force.

The Sacrament of the Lord's supper is allowed

to be more than a memorial, inasmuch as it is allowed to be a communion of the participants, from the words which follow: "We being many, are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread."* It is allowed, I say, in being a communion of the participants, to be something more than mere remembrance of a benefactor. It causes the receivers (as we have read) "of many to become one body." But if it be merely a commemoration of a departed benefactor, the receivers are not made by it one body, but remain, as they were, separate professors of one common faith. They were connected in the circumstance of a common profession of faith, before they partook of the bread; and are not at all the more incorporated by a mere act of commemoration, which each of them may separately perform, whether in solitude or in company. But by their "communion of the body and blood" of Christ, they become mystically united to each other and to him; they become one body in a mystical communion.

If the Sacrament had been the mere remembrance of a benefactor, how could the crime of the Corinthians have been so great, as to render them "guilty of the body and blood of Jesus Christ;"† that is, involved in the guilt of his intentional murderers? "There was more in it than a mere remembrance," says Bishop Warburton, "or St. Paul aggravates their crime." Was the festivity of the Corinthians, if carried even to some degree of excess, a crime so atrocious as to constitute them no less guilty than the murderers of Jesus Christ, when the very exuberance of their joy might arise from an overflowing gratitude to a benefactor, at a feast appointed by himself, purposely for a chearful commemoration.

* 1 Cor. x. 17 † 1 Cor. xi. 27.

They might have been guilty of very blamable irreverence and indecorum in their excess; but not guilty of a crime equal to the murder of our Saviour, unless there be something more in the feast which they profaned than mere remembrance. "To rank these criminals," says the same able prelate, "with the murderers of the Lord of Life, is a severity of which we cannot see the justice.—But when we view the Sacrament as a feast, or rite, in which the benefits of Christ's death and passion were conveyed, and at the same time slighted by the Corinthians, we can then account for their criminality. Slighting the benefits, was rendering, as far as in them lay, the death and passion of Christ ineffectual, which was the purpose of his murderers;" therefore the crime of the Corinthians, thus viewed, had a similarity to that of his murderers, and justly provoked the Apostle's indignation.

I suppose the modern degraders of the Sacrament will not deny, that St. Paul understood the nature and design of the Sacrament better than themselves; and it appears from his opinion of the Corinthian profanation, that he could not consider it as a mere memorial. No method of keeping a feast of simple commemoration could render the partakers equally guilty with those who crucified their Saviour; the crime which is implied in the words, "guilty of the body and blood of Jesus Christ."

Without repeating all the arguments of those writers who answered Bishop Hoadly, I think it will appear from the following pages, that the Lord's supper is attended with present benefits of the highest nature, and therefore cannot be a mere memorial, or a mere act of obedience, in which neither is the soul strengthened and refreshed, nor any inward and spiritual grace conferred. Strength, refreshment,

and Divine assistance, are the benefits, which the church in her Catechism, founded on Scripture, (particularly, in this part, on the sixth chapter of St. John,) teaches her children to expect from a worthy participation of the Lord's supper; and they are benefits, which the pious, according to their own confessions, have in all ages experienced with joy* and gratitude.

SECTION V.

The Sixth Chapter of St. John contains Passages (from verse 25 to verse 36, and from verse 46 to verse 64) which refer to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

In the present discussion, I think it very material, that the passages respecting the eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of Man, in the sixth chapter of St. John, should be generally understood (as they were in my opinion certainly meant) to point out, the Sacrament of the Lord's supper, the Eucharistical Feast on the ONE GREAT SACRIFICE.

I shall, therefore, for the sake of establishing so important an opinion, call in an auxiliary whose sermon on the subject is not more remarkable for the elegance of its composition, than its perspicuity and force, though I am aware the writer is on some occasions deemed obscure. I am myself convinced that the passages in question relate to the solemn feast of the Eucharist, which our Saviour afterwards instituted, and for which he gradually prepared the minds of his disciples, by this most remarkable discourse:

"With regard," says Bishop Cleaver, to the objection to the sacramental construction of these pas-

* Mens deficit quam non recepta Eucharistia erigit et accendit *Cyprian; Epist.* 54 *ad Corinth.*

sages, (the passages in the sixth chapter of St. John,) drawn from the non-institution of the Sacrament at the time when this discourse was delivered, I will only oppose to it one plain fact, which is this; that the same evangelist, St. John, has, in the third chapter of his Gospel, preserved a discourse of our Lord's with Nicodemus, which expressly mentions the sign and the thing signified, the necessity, and the good effects of Baptism, long before that Sacrament was instituted.

"There can therefore, be no presumption drawn against the application of this chapter to the institution of the Lord's supper, from the time when this discourse was delivered, which would not equally militate against the application of the third chapter to the sacrament of Baptism: an application which is, notwithstanding, universally allowed. It should likewise be remembered by those who urge this objection, that the institution of Baptism, however early in the course of our Lord's ministry it was described and explained, was not enjoined till after this of our Lord's supper.

"So much for the objection by itself considered; but I would make a further use of this discourse upon Baptism, between which and that under consideration, there is more than an accidental resemblance.

"Our Saviour had told Nicodemus that he must be born again; Nicodemus replies to the impossibility of the thing, in the obvious and literal sense of the words. Jesus, in answer, with peculiar solemnity and claim to attention, points out the possibility and the means of being born again, as well as the necessity of such regeneration: 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of

God.' To which, still remarking on the want of apprehension of Nicodemus, he adds, 'If I have told you earthly things, and you believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things.'

"In the sixth chapter Jesus had said, 'The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.' The Jews again answering, as Nicodemus had done before, to the impossibility of the thing, in its literal sense, said, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat.' To which our Lord returns an answer, corresponding to that given to Nicodemus, even to the very turn of the sentence: 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.' The purport of which words is repeated and confirmed in the three next verses, to which he adds, still remarking on their want of apprehension, 'Doth this offend you? What, and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before?' A reply so exactly parallel to that with which he had concluded his conversation with this Master in Israel, that the bare juxta-position of these sentences will render each the comment upon the other. From which analogy, I cannot but think, that whoever will observe the style, manner, and connection of these two discourses, will be of opinion, that St. John took pains industriously to show, that the two institutions, which were to distinguish this religion, made part of our Saviour's plan long before they were actually enjoined. What confirms this notion is, that the only miracle which St. John relates after the other Evangelists, is this, of the miraculous increase of bread, a circumstance in itself highly remarkable, as the reason of it is obvious, because it gave an easy opportunity of introducing and explaining the nature of this Sacrament, as the

occurrence relating to Nicodemus had afforded an opportunity of explaining the other. To which I must add, that he is the only Evangelist who insists upon the sacramental importance of either institution; and that his attention, in this instance, is perfectly consonant with the general design of his history, which was written in aid of the other Evangelists, to supply such doctrines as he judged might be most usefully added, and at the same time, to correct the misrepresentations of some already received."

The learned Bishop proceeds to answer other objections in a manner equally able. He concludes a convincing discourse, with saying, "If we are justified in interpreting the words of this chapter, 'He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him,' directly of this Sacrament, this passage will have an important influence on forming our opinion respecting the peculiar benefits arising from this institution, and we have only to inquire into the meaning of the words, 'dwelleth in me and I in him,' to determine what these benefits precisely are.

"To dwell in Christ, therefore, is to live according to his commandments; to have Christ dwelling in us, is to enjoy the influence of his Holy Spirit.

"Thus St. John: 'Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit that he hath given us: again, hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.'

"If then we rightly interpret the text, the assistances of the Spirit are directly annexed to the Sacrament of the Lord's supper. But the sanctification of the Spirit supposes redemption and pardon; which, therefore, might else from this chapter be proved a benefit consequent upon this ordinance. But

as these truths may be more obviously and simply deduced from the words of the institution, and from the nature of the rite itself, I shall not insist at large upon the argument, but content myself with having shown, in opposition to those who have interpreted the eating and drinking Christ's body and blood to be no more than keeping his commandments, that it alluded to something more analogous to the literal sense of the words: in opposition to those who interpret it only of the thing signified in the sacrament of the Lord's supper, that it includes the signs also; without which the notion of spiritual manducation is unfounded and the passage, both to Jew and Christian, inexplicable: in opposition to those who consider the Lord's supper simply as a remembrance of his death, that it is a commemoration of the sacrifice for sin made by his death, and a symbolical feast upon a sacrifice; and is therefore a pledge and means of communicating to us all the benefits of that sacrifice."

Such is the opinion of this ingenious writer on these passages of St. John; and such also is, and was always, upon due consideration, mine. But though it is certainly proper to confute the erroneous interpretations of controversialists, who, from motives of religious party, have denied the reference of this chapter to the Sacrament, yet I cannot help observing, that scarcely any reader of common sense can doubt that the words, concerning eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ, are to be applied to the sacrament of the Lord's supper. I venture to affirm, that they are now so understood by all who have not been misled by the perusal of partial commentators, leaders in the field of controversy; and I think the decisions of common sense in matters of which it is competent to judge, are often

more to be depended upon, as criterions of truth, than the refined speculations of men accustomed to dispute merely for the palm of victory. Such men have often divested religion of all its divinity.

I shall again have occasion briefly to consider the reference of the sixth chapter of St. John to the Sacrament, when I proceed more particularly to review the benefits annexed to the worthy reception of it.*

SECTION VI.

The Lord's Supper considered as a Feast on, or after, a Sacrifice.

THAT the Lord's supper is a feast on, or after, a sacrifice, is an explication of it which has been adopted by the ablest and most learned men. Dr. CUDWORTH, a great and venerable name, first suggested it in this country; and it has been firmly supported by the ingenious arguments of succeeding divines. They have, indeed, given additional confirmation to it; but the honour of the original idea should, I think, be assigned to CUDWORTH alone.

From a close and impartial attention to his and their arguments, I am fully convinced, that the

* When St. Paul tells us, 1 Cor. v. 7, 8, "Christ, our Passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast," his words imply, that the Jewish Passover was a sacrifice and feast upon it, and that Christians have a Passover which resembles it:" that is which is a feast upon a sacrifice.—Dr. TOWNSON.

"We must not understand, in the Sacrament, the bare, naked, and empty remembrance of Christ's death, the calling to mind the history of his passion, which the devils can do, and the worst of men: Thus to remember Christ, were but to forget him; but, we must understand a remembrance cum effectu; the relying on his death; with a lively faith, and the applying of his merits to our souls."—T. FULLER.

Eucharist is a feast upon a sacrifice; a feast after the great sacrifice of all, even Jesus Christ upon the cross; in which all other sacrifices, however various in their kind and modes, from the rising to the setting of the sun, were ordained to terminate.

But the doctrine of the Sacrament, as a feast on, or after, a sacrifice, may not be obvious to the apprehension of the unlearned, who are no less deeply concerned in it than the best informed; and it should therefore be explained to them, in order to satisfy their minds, and facilitate its general adoption.

The death of Christ was a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, a sacrifice that comprehended in it, not only the commemorative oblation of the Pascal Lamb, but the other Jewish sacrifices, the sin offering and the peace offering. Like them it was to have a feast on, or after, it, and that feast is the Lord's supper. The Heathens, as well as the Jews, had a feast after their sacrifices, and the partakers of the feast, in both cases, were to be partakers of the benefits supposed to redound from the sacrifice. "Are not they which eat of the sacrifice," says Saint Paul, "partakers of the altar?" What then were the benefits of the Jewish sacrifices? of the sin offering, the benefit was forgiveness of sins: of the peace offering, acceptance with God. The sacrifice of Christ on the cross conveys, therefore, to those who partake in its benefits, by partaking of the feast instituted upon it, pardon of their sins and acceptance with God; which must include sanctification of their souls, or, as the church expresses it, an inward and spiritual grace.

I proceed to mention, in a cursory manner, sufficient for my purpose, the Pagan sacrifices. The rites of the Pagan theology were derived from the Jews, though corrupted and distorted, and their

original purpose lost and forgotten in the lapse of time. But the Pagans retained the practice of feasting after a sacrifice, that is, of eating a part of the victim offered, in order to partake of the propitiation supposed to be effected by the sacrifice.

It would be tedious to recite passages from the ancient writers to confirm this assertion. The first book of Homer affords a proof of it. The fact is well known, even to school-boys, and wants not additional confirmation.

Here then are three kinds of sacrifices at present under our view, the Jewish, the Gentile, and the Christian; not comparable indeed in their dignity, but parallel in the circumstance of a feast after each, and in the general purpose of propitiating the Deity. The eating of the oblation, after the Jewish and the Gentile sacrifice, rendered (in the opinion of the sacrificers) the partakers of the repast partakers of the benefits of the sacrifice. The partaking of the feast, after the grand Christian sacrifice, is also a participation in it, and confers all its advantages. The Eucharist is this feast, this *epulum sacrificiale;* to be repeated, while the world endures, after the great sacrifice of Christ on the cross: which itself is never to be repeated, but the benefits of which are to flow by means of the feast upon it, as from a perennial fountain, till time shall be no more.

It is very important that the Eucharist should be considered, as it appears really to be, a feast on, or after, a sacrifice; for this idea comprehends in it a right notion of our Saviour's death upon the cross: that sacrifice which gave rise to the feast, without which, according to analogy, the sacrifice itself would be incomplete. It teaches this most important truth, that our Saviour himself declared his death to be a sacrifice. The sacrifice, however, is nothing to us

till we partake in the feast upon it. We are but idle by-standers, or uninterested spectators, till we worthily eat of those symbols which are appointed to be in the place of the slaughtered victim, once offered: a view of the subject this, which should make every real Christian shudder at the idea of wilfully and entirely neglecting, through life, the Holy Communion.

The sacrifice of Christ, without participants in the feast on, or after it, is merely a violent death inflicted on the holy Person commemorated; and ceases to be a complete sacrifice, or to confer any benefits at all, so far as the non-participants in the feast are concerned. They can have no advantage from a sacrifice, of which they do not partake; but must be saved, if saved at all, by the extraordinary interposition of Divine Mercy, acting independently of the Christian dispensation.

Divines, it is true, have offered to the world *Plain Accounts* and *Practical Accounts* of the Sacrament, according to which the scriptural expressions of eating the body and drinking the blood of Christ are so far from being either plain or practical, that they appear monstrous and irrational in the highest degree. What has eating the body or drinking the blood to do with a mere act of the memory? They are conscious of this irrelevancy, and therefore do not choose to admit the sacramental construction of the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel.

The plainest and most rational account of the Sacrament, that I know of, is that which describes it as a feast on or after a sacrifice. The eating of the body, and drinking of the blood of the victim, are expressions, when the general nature of sacrifices is once explained, perfectly intelligible; and the feast on the OBLATION of the real body and blood is well

emblematized by the bread and wine. It is obvious to remark that the real victim in the sacrifice, could not in this case, even for once, have afforded a real feast, much less a feast to be repeated all over Christendom, till the second advent, when all signs, symbols, types and shadows, shall be superseded by a personal presence, by a substantial form, by a body glorified beyond all power, not only of description, but of imagination.

From the doctrine that we cannot enjoy the benefits of the sacrifices, without being participants of the feast after it, we may understand the awful words of our Saviour: "Verily, verily," (a most solemn asseveration,) "I say unto you, except ye eat of the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye can have no life in you;"* that is, 'I positively declare to you that unless you partake of the sacrifice of myself, by partaking of the feast that I shall institute upon it, ye cannot share the benefits which that sacrifice was intended to confer; even life, spiritual life, and life eternal. "Except ye eat of this bread, and drink of this wine, ye have no life in you." Words too strong and too alarming to be lightly passed over by those who are sincere in their profession of Christianity; and yet words of comfort to those who understand them of the Eucharistical bread and wine.

* John, vi. 53.

SECTION VII.

Dr. Cudworth's Account of the Lord's Supper.

"The Lord's Supper in the Christian Church, in reference to the true Sacrifice of Christ, is a Parallel to the Feasts upon Sacrifices, both in the Jewish Religion and the Heathenish Superstition."

"Lest," says Dr. Cudworth, "we should seem all this while to set up fancies of our own, and then sport with them; we come now to demonstrate and evince that the Lord's supper, in the proper notion of it, is Epulum ex Oblatis, or a Feast upon Sacrifice, in the same manner with the feasts upon the Jewish sacrifices under the Law, and the feasts upon ειδωλοθυτα, things offered up to idols among the Heathens; and that from a place of Scripture where all these three shall be compared together, and made exact parallels. 1 Corinth. x. 14, 15, 16, 18, 20, 21. 'Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say—the cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?—Behold Israel after the flesh; are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?—Now, I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice unto devils, and not to God, and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils—Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils."

Where the Apostle's scope being to convince the Corinthians of the unlawfulness of eating things sacrificed to idols, he doth it in this manner; show-

ing that though an idol were truly nothing, and things sacrificed to idols were physically nothing, as different from other meats, (as it seems they argued, and St. Paul confesses in the nineteenth verse,) yet morally and circumstantially, to eat of things sacrificed to idols in the idols' temple, was to consent with the sacrifices and to be guilty of them.

Which he illustrates, first, from a parallel rite in the Christian religion, where the eating and drinking of the body and blood of Christ, offered upon the cross, is a real communication in his death and sacrifice; "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?"

Secondly, from another parallel of the same rite among the Jews, where always they that eat of the sacrifices were partakers of the altar, that is, of the sacrifice offered up upon the altar. "Behold Israel after the flesh (that is, the Jews;) are not they which eat of the sacrifices, partakers of the altar?"

"In veteri lege, quicunque admittebantur ad edendum de hostiis oblatis, censebantur ipsius sacrificii, tanquam pro ipsis oblati, fieri participes et per illud sanctificari;" as a late Commentator fully expresses it.

Therefore, as to eat the body and blood of Christ, in the Lord's supper, is to be made partakers of his sacrifice offered up to God for us;—as to eat of the Jewish sacrifices, under the Law, was to partake of the legal sacrifices themselves; so to eat of things offered up in sacrifice to idols was to be made partakers of the idol sacrifices, and therefore was unlawful.

For, "the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils." But Christ's body and blood

were offered up in sacrifice unto God, and therefore they could not partake of both together; the sacrifice of the true God and the sacrifice to devils (demons.) "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils."

St. Paul's argument here must needs suppose a perfect analogy between these three; and that they are all parallels to one another, or else it hath no strength.

Wherefore, I conclude from hence: that the Lord's supper is the same among Christians in respect of the Christian sacrifice (Christ once offered on the cross) that among the Jews, the feasts upon the legal sacrifices were; and among the Gentiles the feasts upon the idol sacrifices;—and therefore that (the Eucharist or Lord's supper among Christians) is EPULUM SACRIFICIALE or EPULUM EX OBLATIS—a Feast upon a Sacrifice, or a Feast upon the Oblation or the things offered in Sacrifice,"* which, in this case, were the real body and blood of Christ, originally and now represented by the bread and the wine in the Eucharist.

SECTION VIII.

BISHOP WARBURTON'S *Opinion of the* SPECIFIC NATURE *of the Lord's Supper.*

"THE celebration of the Lord's supper being our constant duty," as it is to "show the Lord's death till he come," and likewise our greatest interest, as it is the "communion of the body and blood of

* Vid. *A Discourse concerning the true Notion of the Lord's Supper.* By R. Cudworth, D. D. The second edition, 1670.

Christ:" it may not be improper to inquire into its specific nature; in order to comprehend both the force of our obligation to frequent the Lord's table, and the value of that benefit we receive in worthily communicating.

The history of its institution is delivered by St. Matthew, in these words, "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take eat; this is my body: and he took the cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it, for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

The rites and ceremonies of the law were typical. A type, as hath been shown elsewhere, arose from the ancient mode of conversing by signs: for, by adding a moral import to a significative sign, the action becomes a type. This sacred rite which (together with Baptism) was to take place of the whole Jewish ritual, is, like that ritual, typical also; but with this difference: the Jewish rites were productive of things future; and so were obscure and intricate: this, significative of a thing past; and so, clear and intelligible.

Thus far as to its form. Its specific nature will be our next inquiry. To have an exact idea of this, two things must be well considered: the state of religion at the time this rite was instituted, and the particular season in which it was celebrated.

In those ages of the world when victims made so great a part of religion, both of Jews and Gentiles, the sacrifice was always followed by a religious feasting on the thing offered; which was called the feast upon, or after the sacrifice; the partakers of which feast were supposed to become partakers of the benefits of the sacrifice. Now, from the Gospel

history of the institution of the Lord's supper, and from St. Paul's reasoning upon it, a celebrated person hath long since shown, with great compass of learning, and force of argument, that Jesus, about to offer himself a sacrifice on the cross for our redemption, did, in conformity to a general practice, institute the Last Supper, under the idea of a feast after the sacrifice. So far that learned writer, Cudworth.

As to the particular season in which this holy rite was celebrated; we are to consider, that the great Sacrifice of the Cross was typically prefigured by several of the temple oblations, and especially by the Pascal-lamb. Now just before the Passion, and while Jesus was eating the Pascal-supper, which was a Jewish feast after or upon the sacrifice, he institutes this holy rite. And as it was his general custom to allude, in his actions and expressions, to what passed before his eyes, or presented itself to his observation; who can doubt, when we see, in the very form of celebration, all the marks of a sacrificial supper, but that the Divine Institutor intended it should bear the same relation to his sacrifice on the cross, which the Pascal-supper, then celebrating, bore to the oblation of the Pascal-lamb; that is, be of the nature of a feast after a sacrifice. For if this was not his purpose, and that no more was intended than a general memorial, or remembrance of a dead benefactor, why was this instant of time preferred to all other throughout the course of his ministry, any of which had been equally commodious?

This reasoning receives additional strength even from what hath been supposed to invalidate it, namely the concluding words of the institution—"Do this in remembrance of me." For though these words, considered alone, might signify no more than

the remembrance of our obligation to him in general; yet when preceded by—"this is my body—this is my blood"—they necessarily imply the remembrance of his death and passion for us, in particular. And could there be a feast after the sacrifice, in which that sacrifice was not commemorated?

It is true, the injunction of doing it in remembrance, implies, that the celebration was to be continually repeated; which was not the case of feasts after the sacrifice; on which, as we say, this holy rite was modelled. But this was a necessary difference; for the great Sacrifice itself, of which this feast was a type, differed in the same manner from all other sacrifices. The Jewish and Pagan oblations had, or were supposed to have, only a passing and temporary virtue. The Sacrifice on the cross is of perpetual efficacy; and will continue to operate till the consummation of all things. It seemed fit, therefore, that the operating virtue of this Sacrifice should be perpetually set before us, in a constant celebration of the feast upon it.

We have now seen what may be naturally, and indeed, what must be reasonably inferred of Christ's purpose in the Last Supper, from the history of its institution.

Let us try next what we can collect of St. Paul's sense, in this matter, who hath occasionally spoken at large concerning it. And here we shall find, that this very sort of feast, which the words of the institution tacitly allude to, St. Paul, in order to show the specific nature of the rite, expressly draws a comparison from; and at the same time, in order to show the efficacy of it, informs us of the end and purpose of those feasts upon the sacrifice.

It is, in that place of his first Epistle to the Corinthians, where he reproves the proselytes to Chris-

tianity for the idolatrous practice of eating with the Gentiles, of things offered to idols, in their feasts upon the sacrifice. His words are these—"I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?—For we being many are one bread and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. Behold Israel after the flesh; are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? What say I then? That an idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils; ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils."

The Apostle professeth, in this place, to write to these Corinthians under their assumed character of wise men. And though perhaps he may use the term a little ironically, and in reproof of the divisions, before objected to them; yet the logical inference drawn from an appeal to such a character, holds not the less for the sarcasm in which it is conveyed. My meaning is, that we may fairly conclude the reasoning to be such as wise men would not disdain to consider; and so regularly conducted, as wise men would best comprehend. In a word, pursued with that science and precision which leaves no room for a loose, popular, and inaccurate interpretation. In the first place, therefore, we may collect, that the cup of blessing is not simply a general commemoration of a deceased benefactor, but a commemoration of Christ's death and passion: "It is the communion of the blood of Christ;" an expression, as

will be seen hereafter, of the utmost elegance, to imply a feast upon the sacrifice. But the inference the Apostle draws from it, puts his meaning beyond all doubt—"For we being many are one bread and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread." He says, the partaking of one bread, makes the receivers, of many, to become one body. A just inference, if this rite be of the nature of a feast upon the sacrifice; for then, the communion of the body and blood of Christ unites the receivers into one body, by an equal distribution of one common benefit: but if it be only a general commemoration of a deceased benefactor, it leaves the receivers as it found them: not one body, but many separate professors of one common faith.

The Apostle having thus shown the Last Supper to be of the nature of a feast upon the sacrifice; for the truth of which he appeals to their own conceptions of it—"the cup of blessing—is it not the communion? &c.; the bread, which we break, is it not the communion?"—he then endeavours to convince them of the impiety of their behaviour, from the nature of these feasts, as they were understood both by Jews and Gentiles; who equally held that they who eat of the sacrifices were partakers of the altar. But what had either of these eaters of the sacrifices to do with the partakers of the bread and wine in the Last Supper, if the Last Supper was not a feast of the same kind with their feasts; But especially, if the three feasts, Jewish, Pagan, and Christian, had not one common nature, how could the Apostle have inferred that this intercommunity was absolutely inconsistent? "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils, &c." For though there might be impiety in the promiscuous use of Pagan and Christian rites; yet the inconsistency arises from their having a com-

mon nature; and so, consequently, (as they had opposite originals) from their destroying one another's effects, in the very celebration. The reasoning stands thus: those who eat of the sacrifices were partakers of the altar. A sacrifice at the altar was a federal rite: consequently, the feast upon that sacrifice became a federal rite likewise. The Lord's table, and the table of devils, therefore, being both federal rites, the same man could not be partaker of both. This is the Apostle's argument to the wise men here appealed to: and we see it turns altogether on this postulatum, that the Last Supper is of the nature of a feast upon the sacrifice. Suppose it now a general commemoration only of a dead benefactor, and all this reasoning vanishes: for though a man cannot execute two federal rites which destroy one another; yet a federal rite, and a bare remembrance, in two contrary religions, have none of this opposition; but may be celebrated, if not without impiety, yet without any of that inconsistency which the learned Apostle here charges upon his licentious Corinthians.

But this was not the only abuse they committed in the celebration of the Lord's supper; nor this the only place in the Epistle declarative of the nature of that holy rite. These Corinthians, as appears by the next chapter, had been guilty of celebrating the Lord's supper in a very indecent manner, by confounding it with their ordinary repasts, or with convivial doings of their own invention, where charity and sobriety were too commonly violated. Now this indiscriminate celebration, the Apostle calls, the being guilty of the body and blood of the Lord; a charge surely much aggravated, were the Lord's supper instituted only to commemorate a dead benefactor. The Corinthians did not make a due distinction between their more ordinary food and the

eating and drinking in memory of a deceased friend. This doubtless was a high ingratitude. Yet to rank these criminals with the murderers of the Lord of Life is a severity in which we can hardly see the justice. But let us only suppose, that St. Paul considered the Last Supper as a feast upon a sacrifice, that is, as a rite in which the benefits of Christ's death and passion were conveyed, and at the same time slighted, and all becomes easy and natural. The profanation of such a rite, by rendering his death ineffectual, was indeed aiding the purpose of his murderers; and therefore might be fitly compared, and justly equalled, to the prodigious enormity of that crime.

Such then, I presume, is the true nature of the Lord's supper. And was the adjusting a precise idea of it, as it referred to a religious custom of antiquity, a matter only of curiosity and speculation, I might perhaps have left it to the ecclesiastical historian. But it appears to me to have important consequences with regard both to our faith and worship. For if the Last Supper be of the nature of a feast after a sacrifice, then is it a declaration of Jesus himself, that his death upon the cross was a real sacrifice. For figurative expression (as some are apt to deem the gospel representation of Christ's sacrifice and atonement) could never produce a religious rite of Divine appointment, arising from, and dependant on a real specification. I say, of Divine appointment, because many of human original have been thus produced. Yet then only (which is a further support to the preceding observation) when the figure had been mistaken for a substance.

If the Last Supper be of the nature of a feast after a sacrifice, then is it productive of great and

special benefits to the partakers. For the partakers of the Jewish and Gentile feasts after a sacrifice did, or were supposed to communicate of the benefits of the sacrifice.

However, a very learned writer, whose principles of reasoning, and method in deducing and conducting them, may serve for a model to the fair inquirer, hath lately endeavoured to prove, in a 'Plain Account of the nature and end of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper,' "that it was instituted merely in remembrance of Christ; that the bread to be taken and eaten was appointed to be the memorial of his body broken; and the wine to be drunk was ordained to be the memorial of his blood shed." His intention in this appears commendable. It was to free the Last Supper from superstition; whose untimely fruit is at best, but a lifeless rubrical piety. Yet in pursuit of this commendable design, he has gone, I presume, too far: He has taken away its specific nature, and left it nothing but its generic. He has excluded the idea of a feast after the sacrifice, in which the celestial benefits of the giver are conveyed; and has confined us to the notion of a mere memorial, in which the gratitude only of the receiver is returned.*

* As I must often mention a diversity of opinions on the nature and end of the Sacrament, I here insert a salutary caution from Bishop Taylor.

"Let no man be less confident in his holy faith and persuasion, concerning the great blessings and glorious effects which God designs to every faithful and obedient soul, in the communication of these divine mysteries, by reason of any difference of judgment which prevails in the several schools of Christians, concerning the effects and consequent blessings of the Sacrament: For all men speak honourable things of it, except wicked persons and the scorners of religion."

SECTION IX.

Though the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper be strictly a Feast on, or after, a Sacrifice, yet, in popular Language, and catachrestically, or by an allowed abuse of Terms,—a common Figure of Speech,—it has been, and may still be, called, a SACRIFICE.—JESUS CHRIST ONCE OFFERED ON THE CROSS *is the* ONLY CHRISTIAN SACRIFICE.

DIFFERENT names, we all know, may be given, without absurdity, to the same thing, according to its different properties and effects; and use and custom will authorize a name not strictly appropriate. Convenience, indeed, may require, that the same religious institution should be always called by the same name; but if it has various properties and effects, several names may be applied to it at different times and places, which, however diversified, may all have some significancy and use, and cause no mistake. One name may have to encounter fewer prejudices than another; and for that reason, though, in a critical sense, less proper, it may yet be allowable. To call the Sacrament a Sacrifice is incorrect; yet it is so termed by many pious persons, whose language and ideas may not be accurate, though their meaning is perfectly right, and their intentions pure.

But the truth is, that nothing is strictly and properly a sacrifice, according to the practice and ideas of those who instituted sacrifices, which is not brought to the altar, and consumed upon it, either in part or wholly; though in popular language, whatever is solemnly offered in the Eucharist, may be, as it has been, termed a sacrifice.

Thus our excellent Communion Service speaks of a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving—a sacrifice of our souls and bodies, a lively, or, in modern

diction, a living, sacrifice. Oblations of money are also offered, in our service, for the use of the poor indeed, but which we pray God, in the first instance, to accept as an offering to Him and as tokens of our charity.*

The schoolmen, however, say, the Eucharist is both a sacrament and a sacrifice; it is a sacrament, so far as any thing is received; and it is a sacrifice, so far as any thing is offered.† They say also, that any thing done to the honour of God for the purpose of propitiating and appeasing him, may be properly called a sacrifice. The ancient heathens did not confine this term to an oblation; but sometimes comprehended under it, the whole of their religious ceremonies, (their ιερουργια,) whether they offered a victim or not. Plautus uses the term sacrifice more than once when he means worship only without an oblation.

Whatever was comprehended by the Jews under the word *eorban*, a sacred gift, it is supposed, by some, to have been considered as a sacrifice; and this they divided into two kinds, the bloody and the unbloody, or the sacrifice of things animate or inanimate.

Any very solemn act of worship, says Turretin, in which something was consecrated to God for his glory, and for man's advantage, was called, in the style of the Old Testament, a sacrifice.

According to this latitude of signification, many pious and learned men have maintained, that the Eucharist itself is a sacrifice, and not merely a feast

* The Christian sacrifice is properly Προσφορα, but improperly Θυσια, for Θυσια comes from Θυω, *macto*, to slay; but in our Christian sacrifice we slay nothing, but commemorate only Him with an oblation of gratitude, who was slain and offered on the cross, as upon an altar, once for all.

† Vide Thom. Aquin. Sum. Quæst. 65. Partis 3 tiæ.

on a sacrifice; and when the term is thus comprehensively understood, there can be no sufficient reason for undertaking to refute them. From very early times, even from the Apostles, it has possessed this name with qualifying epithets, and has been denominated the spiritual sacrifice, the sacrifice of praise, the holy sacrifice, the mystical sacrifice, the unbloody sacrifice, and the reasonable, or intellectual, sacrifice.

The following passage from the prophet Malachi was, in the primitive ages, understood to be predictive of the Eucharistical sacrifice: "From the rising of the sun to the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles: and in every place incense, (interpreted prayers and praises) shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering" (pure because unpolluted with the blood of real victims:) for my name shall "be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts."*

This was so very early applied to the Eucharist, that MEDE, whose opinions are always respectable, thinks the ancients had learned thus to apply it by tradition from the Apostles. It was so applied in the second century by Justin Martyr and Irenæus, the former of whom flourished about thirty years after St. John, and the latter was a scholar of Polycarp, St. John's disciple.

By the Christian sacrifice the learned MEDE thinks the ancient church understood not barely the Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, but the whole act of worship, or solemn service of the church assembled, of which this sacred mystery the Sacrament, was (as he says in allusion to a ring) the pearl and the jewel. No public service of the church was in those times without the celebration of the Lord's supper. According to his definition, the Sa-

* Malachi, i. 11.

crament is "an oblation of prayer and thanksgiving to God the Father, through Jesus Christ." The sum of Mede's elaborate discussion seems to be, that the Eucharist, according to the ancient church, is a sacrifice of prayer and praise, through Jesus Christ, mystically represented in the creatures of bread and wine.

"The ancient church," says he, "understood not, as many suppose, by the Christian sacrifice, the mere sacrament of the body and blood; but the whole sacred action (which *Sacrificium* properly means) or the whole solemn service of the church assembled; of which this sacred mystery was then a prime and principal part; no public service of the church being without it. This observed and remembered, I define the Christian sacrifice, *ex mente antiquæ Ecclesiæ*, in this manner:—

"An oblation of thanksgiving and prayer to God the Father, through Jesus Christ and his sacrifice; commemorated in the creatures of bread and wine, with which God had first (that is, in the sacrifices of the earliest antiquity) been acknowledged as the Lord of the Creature."

To dispute about a variety of names where the same thing is signified, is frivolous; and frivolous disputes are censured by the Apostle. If men choose to denominate the sacrament of the Lord's supper, a sacrifice, in a large and comprehensive sense, as an act of peculiar solemnity, there can be no valid objection to it; for there is at present little danger of encouraging the Popish doctrine of the sacrifice of the mass, the fear of which caused our Protestant divines, at one time, to take particular pains in preventing the name of Sacrifice from being ever applied to the Eucharist.*

* The word altar, strictly and properly speaking, is not the

If the Sacrament be a sacrifice, it is a sacrifice *(sui generis)* of a peculiar nature. It is a spiritual and evangelical sacrifice. The oblation and the benefit are both of a transcendent kind; and the whole transaction, a mysterious intercourse between man and his merciful Maker; in which the greatest good may be conveyed to the former, in any mode, approved by Infinite Wisdom, however unaccountable to the reason of minute philosophers and the cavilling spirit of minute theologists.

But as much false doctrine and mischief has arisen from the representation of the Sacrament as a sacrifice, rather than a feast on the one great Sacrifice, once made for all men; I have thought it proper to discuss the subject in this place, and to repeat that the Sacrament is not a sacrifice itself, but a representation of the one great Sacrifice. I will only add that the use of the words sacrifice, altar, oblation, in an incorrect and inaccurate manner, should be avoided as much as possible; because it may appear to countenance the error of those who pretend that they do properly and truly offer unto God, CHRIST HIMSELF, included in a wafer, the CORPUS CHRISTI contained in a morsel of bread, as a real and propitiatory sacrifice; than which it is not easy to conceive a more blasphemous absurdity.*

right name for the communion table; an altar strictly and properly implying a sacrifice; but disputes about it, to the violation of charity, are, certainly censurable; yet such there have been.

* On the use of the ancient sacrifices, as a standing representation of the one great and universal Sacrifice, the following passage from Dr. Holmes, the late Dean of Winchester, deserves our attention.

"Of faith in the Divine promise, the external expression, at present appointed, is similar to that which God accepted before. To the communicant bread and wine are the body and blood of the Redeemer, after his coming, in the same sense as before his coming, sacrificial blood had been to the offerer. In each of these two

SECTION X.

That the present Benefits of the Eucharist are GRACE *and* PARDON, *is a Conclusion that must follow from admitting that the Sixth Chapter of St. John relates to it:—additional Reasons for thinking that the Expressions of this Chapter, already mentioned, mean much more than* DOCTRINE *and* PRECEPTS.

OURS is a far different task from that of our predecessors. We have not to combat with the errors of Popery: we have not to display the absurdity of transubstantiation, consubstantiation, impanation, and concomitancy; scholastic terms and ideas, which, under the direction of politicians, were called in to aid and support the errors of the prevailing theology. We have to contend with those who, so far from maintaining that there is any thing of corporeal presence and divinity in the Sacrament, seem inclined to insinuate that there is nothing at all in it.

And here it is impossible not to observe, as we proceed, the wonderful propensity of the human mind to extremes, strikingly exhibited in the present

periods, the visible signs that showed his death, had on that account a real sacramental virtue; at the first, and at the last, God authorized a standing representation of the universal Sacrifice; only with that difference of effect, which respectively suited the fallen and restored states of nature, and the opening and accomplishment of his scheme of redemption. Faith in the promise of a future Deliverer, and the accepted sacrifice as a sacramental sign of the future effusion of his blood, were both of them to the penitent, real means of justification; faith in the sacrifice, which that Redeemer has offered, and in the promise of eternal life which he has given, and the communion of his body and blood, which he has appointed as sacramental signs of his death, are also now real means of present grace and final glorification."

I will take occasion to add in this place, that to teach that the Sacrament is a material sacrifice, is to degrade it to a legal ceremony instead of a gospel service.

case. It is but a short time ago, when almost the whole Christian world professed to believe that the bread and wine of the Sacrament was converted into the real body and blood of our Saviour; and now divines of high repute endeavour to teach the people, that the whole rite has no significancy but as a memorial, and that it is attended with no peculiar benefits to the receiver of the bread and wine, but such as may attend every other act of obedience.

Our church, indeed, teaches that our souls receive strength and refreshment from a worthy participation of the Eucharist; great effects, and most devoutly to be sought for by all who feel the imbecility and wretchedness of unassisted human nature; and our church is justified in this doctrine, by many passages in Scripture, but more particularly by those already mentioned, in the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel. But the degraders of the Sacrament either omit these passages entirely in their consideration of the subject, or pretend to prove that they mean no more than the doctrines and precepts of the Christian religion in general. Flesh and blood, according to them, are synonimous with theological tenets and moral maxims: and the emblematical feast on the sacrifice of Christ, the victim offered for us, is no more than the receiving of his gospel, and believing the history of his life and death narrated by the four Evangelists, together with the Epistles of the Apostles, who are said by some of the degraders, more adventurous than others, not always to reason conclusively, but to talk downright nonsense.

It is true, indeed, that the very remarkable expressions of the chapter in question have been the subject of much dispute among our forefathers; and it must not be concealed that many of them denied

their sacramental construction;* but it is easy, on a candid retrospect of the controversies which agitated the Christian world, to see the principal reasons for the denial. The Roman Catholics denied, in some instances, their application to the Eucharist, because they feared lest it might render it necessary to give the cup as well as the bread to the laity. The Protestants, on the other hand, were apprehensive that the Roman Catholics might take advantage of the declaration "my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed," to derive countenance to the doctrine of transubstantiation.

Both these causes of misapprehension operating but little at present, a careful and unprejudiced examiner will see reason to conclude without doubt, that the passages of this chapter refer to the Eucharist, afterwards more expressly instituted; and that our Saviour intended (by words intelligible enough after his ascension) to instruct his hearers in the benefits of that mysterious rite.

The opponents contend, that the phrases, eating our Saviour's flesh and drinking his blood, mean no more than believing his doctrine or receiving his instructions. Bishop Hoadly in explaining our Saviour's discourse, in the sixth chapter of St. John, says, "that eating his flesh and drinking his blood, was only a high figurative representation to the Jews, of their duty and obligations to receive into their hearts and digest his whole doctrine." But is it to be conceived, that expressions so singular should be adopted for such a purpose? Unless some parallel expression can be found in ancient authors, what can prove that the reception of a teacher's

* Panem de cœlo descendentem comedere non possunt; sed obstupescunt dentes eorum, non ciborum austeritate, sed vitio dentium.—Hieronymus.

doctrine can be described, as eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the teacher? Does not common sense suggest that expressions so singular should be interpreted by similar expressions, if any occur in any other part of the Evangelical or Apostolical writings? And, as similar, or rather the same expressions actually do occur, in St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. Paul, which are universally allowed to mean the Sacrament, ought not these, of the sixth chapter of St. John, in fair construction, to be admitted to mean the sacrament of the Lord's supper, thus announced in a predictive intimation of its nature and efficacy? The opinion that these words relate to the Eucharist, and mean a spiritual manducation, (as it is called,) removes all the difficulty which arises from supposing our Saviour intended by such extraordinary words nothing more than the reception of his doctrines in divinity, and his precepts in morality. It renders the words perfectly proper, and peculiarly apposite.

I consider these passages as thrown out to prepare the minds of the Apostles for the institution of the Sacrament: and, under this notion, they appear in this place with singular propriety. An institution so extraordinary required that the minds of the Apostles, who, at that period, were not very docile in spiritual matters, should be gradually prepared for it.

St. John wrote his Gospel to supply the omissions of the others, and, according to that design he had no occasion to add the history of the institution, which the preceding Evangelists had already given, and which was already known; but it was highly proper to add these passages in the sixth chapter, because they tended to elucidate the design of the Sacrament, and to point out its momentous conse-

quences, to those who might be inclined to consider it as a bare memorial, or as affording no present benefits to the communicant.

It is not reasonable to suppose the same expressions, and such remarkable ones, were used by the same speaker, or writer, in senses entirely different. Therefore, if our Saviour's words, "eating the body or flesh," in St. Matthew, mean the Sacrament, it is unreasonable to interpret them differently in St. John.

This chapter, considered as referring to the Sacrament, fully proves the important benefits immediately arising from it; "*He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him.*"

How can God dwell in us but by communicating his Spirit to us? And how can we dwell in him, that is, in his favour, in a participation of his excellence and his happiness, but by receiving his grace, and the inspiration of his Holy Spirit.

Most assuredly the present benefit arising from a worthy reception of the Sacrament, is the greatest that man can possibly receive, in his sublunary state; for it is the assistance of the Spirit of the Almighty: it is Light and Life.

But the Holy Ghost will not inhabit a temple polluted with sin. It follows, therefore, that the sin is removed, and that remission takes place, as soon as the benefit of Divine assistance is received.

When sin is sincerely repented of and done away, who can doubt but that the Father of all mercies vouchsafes a perfect remission of all penalty incurred? Therefore grace and pardon are the great benefits annexed to the Eucharist; it being always understood, (and in an affair of so much moment it cannot too often be repeated,) that the communicants, in order to partake the benefits, must receive, in the

full sense of the word, worthily; that is, with firm faith and sincere repentance. And in answer to the question why it is necessary to receive the Sacrament, when grace and pardon might otherwise be vouchsafed to faith and repentance: let it be answered, that the reception of the Sacrament is commanded by him who has a right to prescribe, without assigning any reasons, his own mode of conferring his own undeserved favour.*

SECTION XI.

The primary and most important Benefit annexed to the worthy Reception of the Eucharist, is a Vouchsafement of Grace in more Abundance than ordinary, from which, of course, flow other Benefits, necessary to the Christian Life.

THE great and prominent benefit derived from the sacrament of the Lord's supper is, grace,† or the benign

* "Cum Sacramentis, ex Dei Pacto, conjuncta est Vis quædam Divini Spiritus, per quam agunt infallibiliter in omnibus iis, quibus debite administrantur, quique illa suscipiunt, cum eâ, quam Deus in iis prærequirit, dispositione." LE BLANC.

On the peculiar necessity of obeying the command in this case, let us hear Dr. Towerson.

"Besides, that every neglect of the command, is (as such) a sin against the imposer of it; and must consequently not only despoil us of his favour, but expose us also to his wrath and vengeance; besides, that such neglect must be yet more sinful and dangerous, which is a neglect of such a command, as is enjoined for the subject's profit; He, who commands this or that particular, for such or such an end, must thereby be presumed to declare, that he will not give it in any other way than that which is prescribed by him; because otherwise a door would be open to the violation of his authority, which every wise lawgiver must be supposed to provide against."—TOWERSON *on the Sacrament.*

† Nimis sacramentorum virtutem evacuant, qui volunt ea tantum esse, vel notas Christianorum, vel symbola mutuæ charitatis, vel testimonia animi erga Deum grati, vel allegoricas commone-

influence of the Holy Spirit on the human heart. The remission of sins must, I have already said, of necessity attend it; for it cannot for a moment be supposed, that grace or the influence of the Holy Spirit, would be imparted to a human being, still remaining under the displeasure of the Almighty. It would, it has been observed, be a contradiction in terms to affirm, that grace is bestowed by the Deity on a wretched mortal whose sins continue unforgiven, and while unforgiven, must render him an object of abhorrence, and of punishment, instead of divine grace or favour.

The sacramental feeding on the body and blood of Christ is the reception of spiritual nourishment, emblematically represented by those material elements, which contribute most to animal nutrition and refreshment, bread and wine. Growth in grace is the consequence of such spiritual aliment. All Christian virtue is promoted by it, and thus ultimately salvation, or eternal life, becomes the effect of this holy rite. So that the immediate benefits of a worthy participation of the Eucharist, are grace and pardon; and the remote, salvation, or a happy immortality.

It is very true, that all other religious and virtuous acts are conducive to these ends: but this act more immediately and effectually than others; not only because, when rightly and duly performed, it supposes and comprehends all religious and virtuous dispositions, but because it is the appointment of our

factiones; quibus, tanquam picturis, ob oculos nobis ponatur Christiana mortificatio, vivicatio et spiritualis alimonia; vel qui ea duntaxat instituta volunt ad excitandam fidem per modum objecti repræsentivi; vel qui fatentur quidem esse symbola gratiæ; sed duntaxàt antè et extra Sacramenta collatæ; non autem gratiæ præsentis; hoc est, quæ in legitimo Sacramenti usu exhibeatur et conferatur.

GER. VOSSIUS, *de Sac. Vi et Effic.*

Saviour; the positive instituted, means, commanded by him, who knew what was in man, and what was best adapted to promote his advancement in all goodness and happiness.

The Eucharist seems to be a more important sacrament than baptism,* and much more effectual than instruction by hearing, because they are merely initiatory, but the Eucharist is perfective;† or, as it was anciently called, the finishing of the man in the school of Christianity. If any part of religious service is allowed to be effectual in procuring grace, pardon, and salvation, the Eucharist is much more; because it is the principal and the most solemn act of a Christian's devotion; and effects an union, or communion, with Christ himself, as well as with all that call upon his name. The Spirit of God is the grand agent in it, and the soul of man the object. Great is the mystery; and great, without doubt, must be the benefits under agency so extraordinary.

It is absurd to argue that the Sacrament is unnecessary, because God gives grace and pardon by other means, whenever it seems good to his wisdom and mercy. It were more reasonable to say, that if he bestows these blessings sometimes without them,

* "Yet the sacrament of baptism is confessedly a means of conveying the gift of the Holy Spirit; since, when we are born of water, we are also born of the Spirit; and the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, are joined together. Why, then, should not Divine grace accompany the sacrament of the Lord's supper; since, as has been before shown, the reason is the same in respect of both?

"God, the giver of all grace, may appoint what means he pleases of giving, and require what condition he pleases also in us of receiving it. He can give it with or without any instruments or means; but if he has been pleased to appoint water, bread and wine, as the instruments of conveyance, why should this be thought a thing incredible?" BOWYER *on the Sacrament.*

† TEAEION.

we have more reason to expect that he will bestow these blessings with them, because these are means chosen and appointed by himself, for reasons unknown, indeed, to us, but sufficiently known, we may be sure, to his infinite wisdom. All we have to do is, to embrace the means appointed by him. Whenever the angel moves the waters of the pool, it is ours to immerge ourselves, if we wish to obtain a cure, and not to stand arguing on the bank, and saying to ourselves or others, there are other modes of obtaining the like relief, better approved by our own fancy, our own judgment, or even our own supposed experience. We should rather say, here are instituted means of cure, which could not have been instituted without sufficient reason; and being instituted by superior wisdom, they are likely to produce a more effectual and more permanent relief, than any medicine which could be suggested by human ingenuity.

All modes of instruction, such as preaching and reading;* all modes of devotion, except the idolatrous, certainly tend to procure grace;† and that portion of grace, so procured, may, by the mercy of God, be sufficient for us; but these are all preparatory to the great opportunity afforded in the Eucharist, for changing our hearts entirely, for our participation of the divine nature, and for receiving an earnest, a pledge, an assurance (under the divine seal) of salvation, or a happy eternity. Faith, hope, and charity, are wonderfully improved by the

* Verbum et Sacramenta in eo conveniunt, quod ambo gratiam regenerationis offerant et exhibeant; sed, quod nonnunquam Sacramentis peculiariter adscribi videtur, id inde est, quod fides in Sacramentis hanc gratiam videat clariùs, apprehendat fortiùs, teneat certiùs.—*Voss. de Sacramentis*, page 251.

† Ascensus Gratiarum, Descensus Gratiæ. Cassiodorus.

Eucharist. Our faith is increased by the reception of the Sacrament. We must, indeed, have faith in order to receive worthily; but to him that hath shall be given, in this holy ordinance. The actual participation of grace is so pleasant,* that it gives the soul an appetite for more and more: the mind experiencing the faith of God's promises in the actual reception of his blessings, is so confirmed in goodness, as to be in little danger of relapsing ever after, into any great sins, much less, into doubt and infidelity.

Hope of everlasting felicity is encouraged in the Eucharist by a foretaste of Heavenly happiness, enjoyed, in some degree, while the communicant is under the influence of the Divine Spirit, shed upon his heart. He feels a serene complacency, above all earthly joys, in worthily performing this mysterious rite.

Charity is peculiarly promoted by the Communion. We are taught in it to view Christ as our head, and ourselves, with all Christians, as members of his mystical body. It is most truly a feast of love; and the heart that feeds upon it with the true relish of the repast, cannot retain a particle of envy, revenge, or malevolence.

All these (and more might be enumerated) appear to me, as I believe they do to the majority of Christians uncorrupted by the pride of modern philosophy, to be the present benefits of the sacrament of the Lord's supper. Nor let any one imagine the cause inadequate to the effect; Omnipotence can give efficacy to causes, which to man's limited understanding appear unconnected with the effect, as well as totally inadequate to its production. In the present case, it must ever be remembered, that the

* Delectatio victrix.

Holy Spirit, and not the created elements, is the cause; and that all that has been described, and much more, can doubtless be effected by that Divine Person with the most perfect ease. Nor let any one, who believes in the Gospel, doubt this efficacy of bread and wine, as emblems under the Divine direction; while he remembers that our Saviour cured corporeal blindness by the application of the first materials that occurred, even the moistened clay, however unequal to the purpose it may appear to men, whose narrow understandings are chained down to the confines of human art and science.

It is a satisfaction to me to produce the testimony of Bishop Warburton, on the present benefits of the Sacrament; and I rather choose his testimony (as I have intimated before,) because he was a declared enemy to every thing which savoured of irrational enthusiasm.

"Having now," says he, "so largely inquired into the specific nature of this holy rite, we are enabled, in very few words, to show (which we proposed as the principal end of the inquiry) what these benefits are which we receive at the Lord's table.

"Christ, by the sacrifice of himself upon the cross, purchased the redemption of mankind: and this rite being by its nature commemorative thereof, as it is a feast upon a sacrifice, each partaker receives, of consequence, the seal of pardon, and consequently of restoration to his lost inheritance.

"But as this operates only on the terms of repentance and newness of life, the gift would be defeated, by being bestowed on a condition which our perverse nature so much opposes, was not this nature softened and subdued, by the power of grace, that promised blessing peculiar to the gospel dispensation.

Now, as the influence of the Holy Spirit constitutes the most intimate communion of God with man, what time can we conceive so highly sanctified for the reception of it, as that in which we renew our federal union with our Lord and Master, in his last Supper, called by St. Paul, the Communion of his body and blood?"

It appears from this passage, that Bishop Warburton, who writes on the Eucharist in a masterly manner, was convinced of this most important doctrine: that grace is vouchsafed in more abundance than ordinary, at the time in which we celebrate the Holy Communion.*

SECTION XII.

Christ's more intimate dwelling with us, or our Participation of his Divine Nature considered, as an Effect of, and Benefit annexed to, worthily receiving the Lord's Supper.

THERE is no idea that occurs more frequently throughout the New Testament, than the mystical union of Christ with all true believers. Two allusions are chosen by the sacred writers to express the inti-

* Nemo dubitavit, in sacrâ Eucharistiâ fidelibus dari ΠΡΟΣΘΗΚΗΝ ΧΑΡΙΤΟΣ. GROTII Epist. ad Ger. Joan. Voss.

At THAT TIME, Η ΑΝΩΘΕΝ ΠΙΠΤΟΥΣΑ ΤΡΟΦΗ, as SUIDAS calls the MANNA, descends on the hearts ΤΩΝ ΠΙΣΤΩΝ in greater abundance, like gracious showers in the vernal season, causing the seeds of religious virtue to germinate in the good ground of a good heart. Grace is the Manna of Christians; the Bread of Life; ΑΡΤΟΣ ΟΥΡΑΝΙΟΣ, ΑΡΤΟΣ ΑΝΗΡΟΤΟΣ, ΑΡΤΟΣ ΑΣΠΟΡΟΣ, ΑΡΤΟΣ ΑΧΕΙΡΟΓΕΩΓΗΤΟΣ, *bread obtained without the plough, bread without seed corn sowed in the earth, bread unindebted to the labour of the husbandman,* ΒΡΩΜΑ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙΚΟΝ, 1 Corinth. x. 3. Ο ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ εστι ΤΟ ΜΑΝΝΑ, *ως φυσει ζωη ων, και τα παντα ζωογονων, ος εστιν αρτος ο τρεφων* ΨΥΧΗΝ *και σωμα.* AMMONIUS.

macy of this union, one from the vegetable world, the other from the animal. Christ is represented as a vine, and true believers, as the branches. What closer connection can be conceived than this; the branches of the tree deriving all their life and nourishment, and consequently growth, from the stem in which they vitally inhere? Christ is also represented as the head of a body, of which believers are the limbs or members.

Our church, in her excellent Communion office, asserts, that those who receive the Sacrament worthily, "dwell in Christ, and Christ in them; that they are one with Christ, and Christ with them." In what can this union consist? Certainly in some degree of resemblance at least, though it cannot be any approximation to him, in power or in knowledge. In what then does it consist? Doubtless in his Holy Spirit's influence, or emanation on us, producing godlike qualities, goodness of heart, upright, honest intention, purity, and universal benevolence. How is it principally, and by Christ's appointment, to be effected? By worthy participation of the Sacrament. Man, through Divine mercy, is rendered, in the Eucharist, a partaker of the Divine nature. A food to the soul is supplied by the Sacrament, in consequence of which it is nourished, and arrives at that wonderful improvement in goodness and purity, which resembles in kind, though not in degree, the Divine; hence the Eucharist has been named, by great divines, the Sacrament of Nutrition. What more intimate union can exist, than that of the aliment with the body nourished by it?

As the daily waste of our bodies requires a supply of food, so likewise the decay of grace, and the decline of goodness in our dispositions, render frequent repair and support necessary. We are sus-

ceptible of diminution and augmentation in grace, as long as life continues, and "except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you:"* the principle of life will be extinct without this food; and this food is afforded in the greatest plenty, at the feast of the Eucharist; a feast for ever to be repeated after the one great Sacrifice.

Our Catechism expresses the true doctrine in terms which may perhaps be considered as too strong; since, from their strength, they are liable to misconstruction. It asserts, that the body and blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken in the Sacrament.† The compilers, however, could not mean, by "verily and indeed," to teach the doctrine of transubstantiation; for we know they abhored it. If it be asked, what did they mean? I answer, that they meant, in opposition to the Romanists, that all,

* John, vi. 53.

† "The sacraments and symbols, if they be considered in their own nature, are just such as they seem, water, and bread, and wine. They retain the names proper to their natures; but because they are made to be signs of a secret mystery, and water is the symbol of purification of the soul from sin; and bread and wine of Christ's body and blood; therefore the symbols and sacraments receive the names of what themselves assign: they are the body, and they are the blood of Christ; that is, they are metonymically such. But because yet further; they are instruments of grace in the hands of God; and by these his Holy Spirit changes our hearts, and translates us into the Divine Nature; therefore, the whole work is attributed to them by a synecdoche; that is, they do in their manner the work for what God ordained them, and they are placed there for our sakes, and speak God's language in our accents: and they appear on the outside. We receive the benefit of their ministry, and God receives the glory."

Bishop Taylor.

In sacramentis ea conjunctio est signi et signati, ut in legitimo signi usu, ex promissionis divinâ virtute, simul donetur signatum.

Vossius, de Vi et Efficacid.

whatever our Saviour intended by eating his body, and drinking his blood, is really and truly taken in the Lord's supper, notwithstanding there is no real and material flesh or blood either seen or tasted throughout the whole transaction. They mean to say, that though the bread continues bread still, and the wine is but wine, yet, whatever our Lord intended, is verily and indeed received by the faithful, without the necessity of transubstantiation, to all intents and purposes of affording spiritual nourishment to their souls; sustentation of the heavenly life, and union with the divine nature.

This spiritual nourishment is that which is called grace, the grace of sanctification. The real presence is not indeed in the sacramental elements, but it is in the worthy receiver; man becomes Christ's by this glorious privilege of divine union, through the Spirit's influence; and this constitutes the prime benefit of the Sacrament; which is undoubtedly the Holy Ghost's indwelling or assistance. "If any man is Christ's he has the Spirit of God dwelling in him."

The passages proving this assimilation of the divine with the human nature, this prime benefit of the Eucharist, in the sixth chapter of St. John, are so full and strong that it is impossible to resist their force. "I am the bread of life," says Christ, "he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood hath eternal life,—dwelleth in me and I in him.—Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." The meaning of which is plainly this; they that feed on Christ in the Sacrament have life, spiritual life in Christ; that is they are connected with him, and supported by him, as the branch by the vine; and all that do not, have no life, but are like dead branches, or branches cut

off from the vital stock of the vine, whence alone they can derive nutrition. The union of the branch and trunk is destroyed; the union of the human with the divine nature is no more; and man, in consequence, decays and perishes like the dead branch of a tree. But let it be remembered, that none but worthy receivers do really feed on Christ in the Sacrament, though they eat and drink the elements. According to an article of our church: "The wicked and such as be void of a lively faith, although they do carnally press with their teeth (as St. Augustine saith) the Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, yet in nowise are they partakers of Christ."

Judas was washed by our Saviour after the declaration, "If I wash thee not thou hast no part in me." Judas was washed with the other disciples, yet it cannot be supposed, that he had any part in Christ. A plain proof that something was to be done in the mind of the disciples whose feet our Saviour washed, either by themselves or the Holy Spirit of Christ, before the bodily act could be efficacious. This is necessary to observe, lest objectors should argue, as they have argued, the absurdity of supposing wicked men united to Christ by a single and outward act, the act of mere manducation. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth," said our Saviour, "the flesh profiteth nothing."

Some among the ancients, whose opinions I forbear to cite, because they have been often cited, and my proposed limits do not allow room, seem to have maintained that the Spirit's operation was on the elements, the creatures of bread and wine. In this, I doubt not, they were mistaken; the Spirit's operation is, I conceive, solely on the recipients; but what they say and held proves that they believed the Spirit powerfully active in the Eucharist; and they

could mean nothing less, in asserting that the elements were sanctified, than that sanctification was communicated through the elements to the communicants, which virtually and ultimately is the same doctrine which is here maintained.

None, who admit the doctrine of the Spirit's energy on the human heart, deny that the Spirit's assistance is afforded to man on many accounts, besides his worthy reception of the Eucharist.* But there is every reason to believe that it is afforded more plentifully, with more comfort, and more certainty, by an ordinance of Christ himself, purposely instituted to bestow it on faith and repentance, than by any other means. Indeed the Sacrament is, as it were, a seal to confirm the gifts already received, as well as an instrument of present influences from on high, and an earnest of future salvation. It is impossible to suppose, but that every blessing must follow from man's union with Christ; that is, from the influence of Christ's Holy Spirit.

That this is the case, is, I believe the general opinion of pious, humble Christians, taught by the gospel, and illuminated by grace, throughout all Christian countries. It is controverted by very few,

* "It is no good argument to say that the graces of God are given out of the Sacrament; ergo, not by, or in, the Sacrament; but rather thus: If God's grace overflows sometimes and goes without his own instruments, much more shall he give it, in the use of them. If God gives pardon without the Sacrament, then rather also with the Sacrament; for supposing the Sacraments in their design and institution to be nothing but signs and ceremonies, yet they cannot hinder the work of God: and therefore holiness in the reception of them, will do more than holiness alone; for God does nothing in vain. The Sacraments do something in the hands of God; at least they are God's proper and accustomed time of grace. There are his seasons and our opportunity. When the Angel stirs the pool, when the Spirit moves upon the waters, then there is a healing ministry." Bishop Taylor.

comparatively speaking, any where; and the few are men who have been misled into a false idea of the strength of human reason, and who endeavour by a proud and superficial philosophy, to explain away all that reason cannot comprehend, in the unsearchable ways of Divine Wisdom. The misfortune is, that, not contented with their own opinions in private, they are taking pains, by publishing them, to rob the pious and humble Christians* of all the comfort they used to receive, and still expect, from the Holy Communion. God's grace† must certainly prevail when the disposition of the recipient is good; but yet, as man's free agency is not destroyed, many may be misguided in their opinions by sophistical reasons, and deviate in their practice in consequence of an error in speculation.‡

* The Norrisian Professor of Divinity, Dr. Hey, has this observation. "My own idea is this: when I say, that, in the Lord's supper 'the body and blood of Christ which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's supper;' I mean that though I may not know precisely what may be intended in Scripture by our eating Christ's body and drinking his blood, yet I believe that whatever is meant, a worthy receiver comes up to that meaning; he performs that action which is prescribed; he obtains that good which is annexed to it."

† "Grace is an extraordinary disposition and vigour of mind to apprehend religious truths."—*Tucker's Light of Nature.*

‡ To evil and worldly-minded men, immersed in sensuality, and entirely occupied by the pursuits of avarice, ambition, or present amusement, the whole of this doctrine, the whole of religious wisdom is flat and insipid; but "So," says Bishop Taylor, "are mathematics to a Scythian boor, and music to a camel:"—And what says St. Paul?

ΨΥΧΙΚΟΣ δε ανθρωπος ου δεχεται τα του πνευματος του Θεου ΜΩΡΙΑ ΓΑΡ ΑΥΤΩ ΕΣΙ. και ου δυναται γνωναι, οτι ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙΚΩΣ ανακρινεται. 1 Corinth. ii. 14.

SECTION XIII.

Union with Christ farther considered.

God is a spirit; the soul of man is a spirit, and the perfection of the soul of man, is its union with the Deity, the pure fountain of all that is good and beautiful.

The gospel of Christ has shown how this union is to be effected. A rite is established by the mysterious operation of which, man, duly qualified by faith and repentance, is to be one with Christ and Christ with him. The union may certainly be effected in any other way that God may in his wisdom choose; but he has actually, as appears by the Gospel of St. John in particular, chosen and appointed, the Eucharistical mode.

There is a natural union with God, and there is an evangelical. The Apostle probably means the natural union when he says, "He is not far from every one of us; for in Him we live and move and have our being."*

But of this union the animal and vegetable world partake with the rational. Man would derive no pre-eminence over the oak of the forest, or the beast of the field, from this union alone; for they as well as he, live and move and have their being in God, who gave and sustains all life.

God, therefore, has vouchsafed to his rational creatures an evangelical or spiritual union, an union accomplished not by nature, but by grace.

* Acts, xvii. 27, 28.

It were profane and blasphemous in man to pretend to such a privilege, if he were not justified in it by the written word of Revelation. We are there taught that, so far from presumption, it is our duty to aspire to it; and that, by the due use of the means prescribed, we shall not be disappointed.

Sacramental communion is, without doubt, one of the most certain means of accomplishing this union with the Deity, because it is the means instituted by our Saviour.* In compassion to our infirmities, he has condescended to take upon him the form of a man, so that his approach to us might diminish that awful distance between a worm crawling on the earth and the Divinity; an interval which might have discouraged us from entertaining a thought of partaking in the Divine nature. Christ, assuming the nature of man, formed an intermediate link in the vast chain which connects heaven and earth. And Christ permits us in the Sacrament to be united to this link, by the mysterious operation of the Holy Spirit.

Our Saviour, during his assumption of the human nature, prayed thus for men: "That they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they may ALSO BE ONE IN US. That they may be one, even as we are one, I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one."†—"For we are members of his body."‡

But far be it from us to affirm that this union is essential, like that of the Trinity; or personal, like that of the divine and human nature in Jesus Christ. It is indeed an union, the nature and manner of which is too mysterious to be conceived by man in this

* "God and Christ are more particularly present in the Sacrament solely by the greater clearness of our optics to discern them, by means of grace."—*Tucker's Light of Nature.*

† John, xvii. 21. ‡ Eph. v. 30.

mortal state. But it is declared to be real, whatever it is, and to be effected by Sacramental communion. Thus much is enough for man to know. He believes the Holy Spirit's influence on his heart to be the bond of union with the Deity. He believes this great privilege is given him in the Eucharist, and he accepts it with pious gratitude. "It is the Lord's doing, and is marvellous in our eyes;" but not at all the less credible because marvellous. Are not the greatest certainties around us marvellous? Is there any thing more marvellous than light streaming from the sun for ever with inconceivable velocity? The sun, absent at an immeasurable distance, yet ever present in its vivifying effects; and bearing some analogy to what we may conceive of spiritual influence, continually flowing from the Fountain of Grace. "We dwell in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit."*

What then remains, but that wretched mortals, instead of disputing about things which are above their finite reason, thankfully avail themselves of the inestimable privilege, allowed them by their Redeemer, and spiritually eat Christ's flesh and drink his blood, and thus become incorporated with him in the mystical union, by which, as St. John says, "We dwell in Christ and Christ in us."†

From this union, effected by the Sacrament, must arise, unless the union should be dissolved by subsequent infidelity or guilt, the other great blessings of Christianity, remission of sins, and eternal felicity.‡

* 1 John, iv. 13. † John, vi. 56.

‡ "By means of this Sacrament our bodies are made capable of the resurrection to life and eternal glory. For when we are externally and symbolically in the Sacrament; and internally, by faith and the Spirit of God, united to Christ, we are united to him who rose again; and when the head has risen, the members shall not

For it cannot be, as I have already observed, that God should be in union with one who continues an object of his displeasure, and, at the very time of union, is doomed by him to perdition. The favour of God thus confirmed by sacramental union, and not forfeited by voluntary and presumptuous disobedience, must secure every blessing which Christianity was intended to bestow on human nature.

Moral virtue cannot but distinguish the Christian, while this union continues; for moral virtue is certainly necessary to the union. Impurity cannot coalesce with purity. "He that keepeth his commands dwelleth in Christ and Christ in him, and hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he has given us."*—"But he that hath not the Spirit of Christ is none of his."† Now the Spirit of Christ is a Spirit of Goodness. The moralist and politician therefore need not fear but that Christians, who are truly what they profess, will be the best members of society; for they cannot but follow every thing that is approved by the Great Governor of the universe; every thing conducive to the real happiness of a community. The sublime doctrine of divine union with man can never encourage licentiousness of manners; for licentiousness would destroy an union "with a Being who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity."

It is of infinite consequence that we seek union with God by every mode, and the Eucharist offers the most effectual. "If a man abide not in me,"

see corruption for ever, but rise again after the pattern of our Lord." Bishop TAYLOR.

St. Ignatius calls the blessed Eucharist, *αθανασιας φαρμακον*, the medicine of immortality—and *συμβολα της ημετερας αναστασεως*, the symbols of our resurrection. Bishop TAYLOR.

* 1 John, iii. 2. 4. † Romans, viii. 9.

says our Lord, "he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."*—"He that hath not the Son of God, hath not life."† Let us beware of sophistical cavils. These words are very emphatic. They must mean something of the highest moment to a Christian; and the meaning is very fairly interpreted, as suggesting the necessity of seeking spiritual food, or union with Christ's glorified body, by a worthy participation of the Lord's supper.‡

SECTION XIV.

Remission of Sins more particularly considered as a present Benefit, annexed to the Eucharist.

I INFER that pardon of sins is the consequence, or rather the concomitant of grace, given in and by the sacrament of the Lord's supper: because we cannot be in a state of acceptance and non-acceptance with God, at the same time; because we cannot be objects of Divine favour, and recipients of grace, while we remain under Divine displeasure and exposed to Divine vengeance.

But I will here consider the remission of sins by itself as a particular benefit, bestowed on the worthy communicant by the Spirit of God in, and by, the Eucharist.

There is an allowed and very evident analogy

* John, xv. 6. † 1 John, v. 12.

‡ Let us hear the words of a most pious and eloquent writer of a neighbouring nation.

"Si je ne communie pas, je suis homicide de mon ame, en le privant de ce qui seul peut la nourrir et la faire vivre."

BOURDALOUE.

Therefore ΔΕΥΡΟ ΦΑΓΕ ΕΝ ΕΥΦΡΟΣΥΝΗ ΤΟΝ ΑΡΤΟΝ ΣΟΥ ΤΟΝ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙΚΟΝ. *Cyrillus Jerosol. Catechis.*

between the two sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's supper.

Baptism implied ablution of impurity; and even the baptism of St. John seems to have conveyed remission of sins. "John baptized in the wilderness, and preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins."* There can be no doubt but that the baptism of Christ was in every respect more efficacious than the baptism of his harbinger. Christ himself declares, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God:"† and St. Peter said, "Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."‡

The efficacy of the two sacraments may be illustrated by their analogy. Baptism conferred pardon of sins committed before admission into the church of Christ; and the Eucharist confers pardon of sins committed afterwards; renewing our first engagements, made at our baptism, from time to time, during the whole of life.

It was mercifully ordered, that the decays of virtue, which, from the corruption of human nature, might happen after the first Sacrament, should be repaired, as occasion required, by the second. Among the benefits of the second is the remission of sins committed after baptism; as among the benefits of the first is the remission of sins committed or entailed, before baptism. The Eucharist was designed in consideration of the misery and infirmity of man, as a continual renewal or confirmation of baptism. The obedience of no man, it may be presumed, is perfect after baptism; and therefore to no man does the Eucharist become

* Mark, i. 4. † John, iii. 5. ‡ Acts, ii. 38.

unnecessary, from the circumstance of his having received remission of sins by his baptismal initiation.

It is indeed said, and truly said, that "None can forgive sins but God."* Neither does the doctrine that sins are remitted in and by the sacraments contradict this assertion; for it is God who remits sins by the mysterious instrumentality† of these holy ordinances: and when the absolution in the Communion service is read, it is a pardon delivered to the repenting sinner from the King of Kings, by the hands of his servant who ministers at the altar, the commissioned messenger of a reprieve.

But I beg leave to observe, that this remission of sins has only a retrospective operation. The sinner may relapse after communion; and without repentance and repeated communion, the remission may be retracted, and he may finally fail of obtaining pardon. But I should think that to the dying complete remission of sins is so far fixed and ascertained by the Eucharist, (since men in that state, can scarcely be in danger of a relapse,) as to afford them just cause of consolation, arising from a firm and well-founded, but humble hope and confidence. And surely it is inconsistent with benevolence to rob them of this last solace, by labouring (against fair inferences of Scripture, and the general opinion of great and good men in all ages of Christianity) to convince the unhappy sufferers, that there are no present benefits, no present grace, no present re-

* Mark, ii. 7.

† "The Sacrament is an instrument; not a physical but a moral instrument of grace, and apt to convey, rather than actually and infallibly conveying it; the actually conveying of that grace, depending on the mere disposition of the party receiving it; who, as St. Paul speaks, if he be not rightly qualified for it, will rather reap damnation by it, than either divine graces, or the rewards of them." TOWERSON.

mission of sins conferred by worthily partaking of the Lord's supper. And be it ever remembered, and without exception understood, that an unworthy partaking is no partaking at all. It is an impious mockery, and must provoke rather than conciliate.

I will add something from the opinion of the ancients, men unspoiled by the pride of reason, concerning the remission of sins, as a present benefit of the communion.

That the ancient church considered remission of sins as a present benefit of the Eucharist, seems evident from the practice which prevailed of admitting those who had incurred its censure to the Lord's supper after penance; by partaking of which, the criminals were entirely acquitted, not only in the sight of the church, but, as was supposed, of God; for they were immediately admitted to all the privileges of those who had never offended, and considered as cleansed, purified, and in a state of holiness and grace.

Some, indeed, of the ancient writers on the Sacrament, have not mentioned remission of sins as annexed to it; probably because it was a doctrine of such public notoriety as to render the particular mention of it superfluous, at the early period at which they wrote; when much of the Christian doctrine was certainly known by uniform and indisputable tradition.

The Clementine Liturgy, the most ancient that remains, supposed to be more than fourteen hundred years old, and probably formed from earlier liturgies, contains a prayer that those who partake of the communion, may obtain, as the just and legitimate consequence of it, remission of their sins. Several succeeding liturgies have similar petitions. And it is by no means to be concluded from those that have

them not, that the doctrine of eucharistical remission of sins was, at the time these liturgies were used, unknown or rejected. The fairer conclusion is, that the doctrine was so generally admitted, that a specification of it was not deemed necessary in the common forms of prayer. It was implied, and followed of course, from a worthy reception.

The Reformers from Popery, appear to have entertained the opinion, that pardon is annexed to the Eucharist. Luther says, the drinking from the sacramental cup applies, seals, and confirms to believers the promise concerning the remission of sins; and Calvin, that it was Christ's design to hold out his body under the representation of bread to be eaten for the remission of sins.

That remission of sins is a present benefit to the worthy partaker, is taught by our own church, is evident from the liturgy and the homilies. We pray in the Communion service, "that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed by his most precious blood;" again, we pray, "that we and all thy whole church may obtain remission of sins, beseeching thy Divine Majesty not to weigh our sins, but to pardon our offences;"—evidently meaning, in consequence of what we have just done in partaking of the holy Eucharist with faith and repentance.

In the homilies we read, "There be but two sacraments, baptism and the supper of the Lord, whereunto is annexed the promise of free-forgiveness of sins." In the context it is implied, that remission of sins is essential to a true sacramental institution.

Bishop Cleaver expresses himself thus on the subject, with his usual ability.

"It will be granted me, that from the very nature of a feast on a sacrifice, itwas a pledge and earnest

to the communicant of all the benefits of the sacrifice to which it belonged; whence I infer, that the feast on the sacrifice of the death of Christ doth hold out to the faith of a Christian all which that Sacrifice, could we suppose it capable of repetition, would, from time to time, convey to the communicant.

"To the question, therefore, in which the whole force of the objection to this notion of the Sacrament lies; does it as totally and perfectly acquit from guilt as the sacrifices under the law did? or rather more accurately stated with a view to the necessary conditions;—Does the Lord's supper, received with faith, convey a total pardon of sins duly repented of? I answer, it clearly does; and that it does, from the very nature of the institution; not as an act of atonement or expiation, but as an application of the atonement made by Christ, comprise and convey all the benefits of it.

"These benefits in the present case, as they influence our happiness in this life, and are means conducive to our happiness in the next, I shall comprise under the leading articles of pardon and sanctification.

"The Lord's supper, therefore, when duly received, doth convey a full pardon and totally acquit from guilt, or the obligation to punishment, so long as the condition upon which its benefits are declared to rest, subsist in the mind of the communicant; that is, it leaves the sinner in a state of acceptance with God so long as he be careful not to forfeit this situation by subsequent instances of misconduct."

I have thus briefly reviewed the most momentous doctrine of remission of sins, as a present benefit of the Sacrament, taking into consideration the analogy of baptism with the Eucharist, and the opinions of the ancients and of our church upon it; but I return

with satisfaction to the opinion I have already advanced, which is independent of human authority, and founded on the firm basis of reason and common sense as well as Scripture; namely that remission must accompany grace. I venture to repeat, that, in theological language, sanctification implies justification, or in plain terms, that as grace is confessedly given in greater plentitude in and by the Eucharist* than by any other means, remission of sin must follow, because grace would be incompatible with the retention of guilt, and the consequent continuance of God's displeasure. The grace of God bestowed on a man, while an object of his wrath, involves a contradiction. The grace of God bestowed in peculiar plenitude, by the sacrament of the Lord's supper, implies peculiar favour and perfect reconciliation. And can peculiar favour and perfect reconciliation be compatible with an implacable determination to remember the transgressions of the offender, and to punish them in a future state? No subtility of the schoolmen can reconcile a contradiction.

* "The Sacraments obtain the Divine aid in the same manner as other means of grace; though being the most sacred of our devotions, they do it in a larger measure, and may be said to bring down the Holy Spirit, as prayer is said to bring down a supply of our wants from Heaven; not that it can move God; but because it moves ourselves within the stream of his blessings. So they draw not the Heavenly power to shed his influence more copiously upon the heart, but draw the heart further into the current of his influence." *Tucker's Light of Nature.*

SECTION XV.

The ANCIENT LITURGIES, *still extant, prove that the primitive Christians, who were probably instructed by uninterrupted* TRADITION *from the Apostles, considered the Eucharist, with respect to the* BENEFITS *annexed to it, in the same Light as it is represented in this Treatise.*

IN acquiring a just idea of the primitive doctrines concerning the Eucharist, considerable regard should be paid to the prayers in the ancient Communion service, or liturgies of the Greek, the Latin, and the Oriental churches. Those prayers certainly contain the opinions of very early ages; which, it is not at all unreasonable to conclude, were handed down to them by tradition from the Apostles.

It is true, indeed, that these liturgies are not thought to have been composed by the persons whose names they bear. They appear to me to be compilations from preceding prayers or liturgies; and to have had a name given to them, not with so much attention to truth as to convenience and popular attraction. Selections and compilations have often passed under one name; thus we say, the Poems of Dodsley, the Grammar of Lily, the Fables of Æsop; though in each of those books there is little of the author to whom the whole is attributed. The ancient liturgies were not national, but merely adapted to the use of separate societies or churches, formed under some favourite bishop or spiritual pastor; who compiled such prayers as he approved from more ancient collections, and then gave them a general name from some particular prayer, which tradition attributed to an apostle or saint of earlier times. The Apostles' Creed is not thought to have

been composed by the twelve Apostles in the form it now stands in; although the articles were probably delivered to the first converts, and although it contains a summary of the Apostles' doctrine.

We have still extant liturgies under the names of St. James, St. Mark, St. Chrysostom, St. Basil, of Nestorius, Severus, and others; all of early ages, but the most ancient is the Clementine. This, however, is not thought prior to the fifth century; I mean in the order and form in which it now stands; for there is reason to believe that some of the prayers in it were handed down partly by memory and partly by writing, from the age of the Apostles, and perhaps from St. Clement.

Litanies, or forms of prayer used at the Sacrament by congregations of Christians, ten, twelve, or fourteen hundred years ago, are not only great curiosities, but certainly convey the ideas which the early Christians entertained on points of doctrine.

In the Clementine liturgy, about fourteen hundred years old, the bishop officiating at the Eucharist says: "Send down thy Holy Spirit, that all who shall partake of this bread, the body of thy Christ, and this cup, the blood of thy Christ, may be confirmed in godliness; may receive remission of their sins,* may be delivered from the devil and his wiles, may be filled with the Holy Ghost, may be made worthy of thy Christ, and may obtain everlasting life."

In the liturgy attributed to St. James, are these words: "Send down, O Lord, thy most Holy Spirit upon us, that all who are partakers of this bread and

* Ινα οι μεταλαβοντες αυτου ΑΦΕΣΕΩΣ ΑΜΑΡΤΗΜΑΤΩΝ τυχωσι.
Apostol. Constit. lib. viii. c. xii: p. 407.
Again, εις αφεσιν αμαρτιων. Lib. viii. c. xiv, p. 410.

this cup may obtain remission of their sins, and eternal life, and be sanctified in soul and body."

In St. Mark's liturgy it is thus written: "We pray and beseech thee, O thou gracious lover of mankind, send down from thy high and glorious habitation, the very Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth, the Lord and Giver of Life, who is everywhere present. Send upon us and these loaves, and these cups, this thy Holy Spirit, that they may be to us, and to all that partake of them, for faith, for sobriety, for healing, for temperance, for sanctification, for the renewing of soul and body and spirit, for communication of the blessing of eternal life and incorruption, for the glorifying of thy holy name, for the remission of sins."

The liturgy of St. Basil, as used in the Alexandrian church: "We sinners, and thine unworthy servants, pray and beseech thee, O gracious Lord, the lover of mankind, that through thy good pleasure, thy Holy Spirit may come upon us and upon these thy gifts here set before thee, and make them the Holy of Holies; and cause this bread to become the body of our Lord God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and eternal life to those that partake of it; and this cup, the precious blood of the New Testament of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ, for remission of sins and eternal life to those that partake of it."

In another place of St. Basil: "O Sovereign Lord, Father of Mercies and God of all Comforts, bless, sanctify, keep, defend, conform, turn from every evil, and lead to every good work, those who have bowed their heads to thee; and vouchsafe that without condemnation, they may partake of these immaculate and life-giving mysteries, for the remission of sins and the communication of the Holy Spirit."

The liturgy of Nestorius: "O Lord, may the grace of thy Holy Spirit come and dwell and rest upon this oblation, that the participation of these holy mysteries may be to all that receive them for eternal life, for resurrection from the dead, and for expiation of bodies and souls, and for eternal salvation."

The liturgy of Severus: "Send upon us thy spirit, the Paraclete: may he descend upon us and upon these oblations set before thee, and sanctify them, that this bread may be made the life-giving body, the body of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins and eternal life, to those that partake of it; and may he make the mixture that is in this cup, the blood of the New Testament, the life-giving blood of the Lord God and King of all, Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and eternal life, to those that receive them."

The Ethiopic liturgy: "Send thy Holy Spirit and Power upon this bread and this cup, and grant that they may be to all that receive them for sanctification and fulness of the Holy Ghost."

The Ethiopic liturgy contains also the following prayer: "O Lord, who sittest upon the cherubim, and beholdest thy people and thine inheritance, bless thy servants and thy handmaids and their children, and give to every one who cometh to partake of thy wonderful table with a pure conscience, remission of sins, together with the Holy Spirit, for the salvation of soul and body, and the obtaining the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven, through the grace and favour of thy only-begotten Son."

I will not add to the number of citations, as these are sufficient to show the sense of antiquity, respecting the benefits annexed to the Eucharist. All the ancient liturgies, by whomsoever composed or compiled, concur in proving that pardon and sanctification were

the advantages expected from worthy communion. On this point there was a general consent of all Christian churches, however they might differ in matters less essential,

The opinion of Archbishop Wake on the authenticity of ancient liturgies is candid and probable: "As for the liturgies," says he, "ascribed to some of the Apostles, as St. Peter, St. Mark, St. James, there is not, I suppose, any learned man at this day, who believes them to have been written by those holy men, and set forth in the manner that they are now published. They were indeed the ancient liturgies of the three, if not of the four, patriarchal churches; the Roman, (perhaps that of Antioch too,) the Alexandrian, and Jerusalem churches, first founded, at least governed by St. Peter, St. Mark, and St. James. However, since it can hardly be doubted, but that those holy Apostles and Evangelists did give some directions for the administration of the blessed Eucharist in those churches; it may reasonably be presumed that some of those orders are still remaining in those liturgies, which have been brought down to us under their names; and that those prayers wherein they all agree (in sense, at least, if not in words,) were first presented in the same, or like terms, by those Apostles and Evangelists; nor would it be difficult to make a farther proof of this conjecture from the writings of the ancient fathers, if it were needful in this place to insist upon it."

If we allow these liturgies, in their present forms, not to be authentic; yet there is little doubt but that their writers, whoever they were, caused them to convey the ideas and doctrines which prevailed at the time of their composition; and this is sufficient for our purpose, which is to prove, that the early Christians, who may be supposed to have been within

reach of tradition from the Apostles themselves, were universally of opinion, that the Eucharist, properly celebrated, conveyed, to worthy communicants, grace and remission.

I have already accounted for the application of the term, Sacrifice, to the feast upon the sacrifice, which occurs in the liturgies. It was a catachresis, or abuse of terms, adapting the name to popular conception; and, indeed, including the idea of a feast on a sacrifice, without which a sacrifice was incomplete.*

SECTION XVI.

The Doctrine of Remission of Sins, in and by the Eucharist, not an Encouragement to Vice, but Incitement to Virtue.

It has been apprehended, with some appearance of reason, that the doctrine of repeated remission of sins by a repeated participation of the Eucharist, may be favourable to perseverance in wickedness. It certainly would be so, if it taught men, that by merely remembering an historical event, or merely performing a formal rite, (an act of implicit obedience,) they could be cleared from all past guilt, how-

* I will here take occasion to remark, that a reliance on liturgies, (or divine service) on attendance at prayer, or the Sacrament, without proper dispositions, as an opus operatum, and not as an opus operantis, is one of the absurdest and most mischievous of the papal errors.

"Relying," says an old writer, "on the opus operatum is as bad divinity as it is Latin." So many sermons heard (he proceeds) so many prayers made, so many alms given, (all opera operata) which many score up to themselves, and reckon upon; will shrink in the tale, when God takes account of them, and will prove sermons not heard, prayers not made, alms not given; because not done as he requires. THOMAS FULLER, 1640.

ever enormous, and delivered from all dread of punishment, however well deserved.*

* "It has been thought somewhat strange, by those who have imbibed wrong notions of the case, that all Christian privileges should be supposed to follow a single duty, when they really belong to the whole systems of duties. But when it is considered, that these privileges are never annexed to this single duty, in any other view, or upon any other supposition, but as it virtually carries in it, or in the idea of worthy reception, all duty, the main difficulty will vanish; for, it may be still true, that those Christian privileges go along with the whole system of duties, and with nothing short of it. We never do annex all Christian privileges to this single duty, but as this duty is conceived, for the time being, to contain all the rest for that we take to be implied in receiving worthily. Let the same objection be argued in a very common case of oaths to a government, or of subscription to articles, to which many state privileges and church privileges are ordinarily annexed: What, may some say, shall all those privileges be given merely for the labour of repeating an oath, or writing a name? No certainly: The outward work is the least and the lowest part of what the privileges are intended for, if it be any part at all, in a strict sense: The privileges are intended for persons so swearing, or so subscribing, upon a presumption that such oath carries in it all dutiful allegiance to the sovereign, and that such subscription carries in it all conformity in faith and doctrine to the church establishment. Of the like nature and use are our Sacramental ties and covenants. They are supposed, when worthily performed, to carry in them all dutiful allegiance to God, and a firm attachment to Christ; a stipulation of a good conscience, and, in a word, universal righteousness, both as to faith and manners: all which is solemnly entered into for the present, and stipulated for the future, by every sincere and devout communicant. Therefore in annexing all gospel privileges to worthy receiving, we do not annex them to one duty only, but to all, contained, as it were, or summed up (by the supposition) in that one. All the mistake and misconception which some run into on this head, appears to be owing to their abstracting the outward work from the inward worthiness supposed to go along with it; and then calling that a single duty, which, at best, is but the shell of duty in itself, and which, in some circumstances (as when separate from a good heart) is no duty at all, but a grievous sin; a contempt offered to the body and blood of Christ, and highly provoking to Almighty God." DR. WATERLAND,

But no such doctrine is maintained by any Christian society, nor by any individual, whose mind is in the least degree improved by reading, by hearing, and by due reflection.

The Sacrament is no Sacrament to those who receive it without repentance, and a firm purpose to lead a new life; a life of holiness which, together with piety, includes all moral virtue. No man, though he may eat the bread and drink the wine, can receive the Sacrament, properly speaking, while he has a secret intention to run into the same sins which he professes to relinquish with abhorrence, declaring, in the most solemn manner, in the Communion service, "That he earnestly repents of his past offences, is heartily sorry for them; that the remembrance of them is grievous unto him, and the burden intolerable."

The disposition of the worthy receiver is so much improved by a due participation in the solemn rite, that it is impossible he should leave the altar table with a design to relapse into sin, under the encouragement of repeated remission. He cannot but consider such conduct as diabolical, and calculated to provoke most justly the wrath and indignation of that God whom he has just endeavoured to propitiate. An intention to repeat his sins, and a worthy reception of the Sacrament are incompatible.

He may, indeed, fall into sin after communion, from the violence of temptation; from inadvertency, and from the frailty of human nature; but he cannot consistently with the hypothesis on which I argue, that he received worthily, he cannot, I say, sin purposely and presumptuously, "that grace may abound," and with an intention to receive the Sacrament again and from time to time, in order to obtain an acquittal for past offences and to begin them

again. If he should plunge into his former sins, or any new ones, tempted with the prospect of absolution, whenever he chooses to receive the Sacrament, his conduct is a proof that he was not a worthy receiver, and that he had no just ideas of the solemn rite; and it is also certain that he will be disappointed in his wicked purpose. His former sins were not remitted to him, though they might have been to every other communicant who, at the same time knelt with him at the altar, and partook worthily. His sins were retained; and in his heart he must know it, for he must know his own hypocrisy and unworthiness. His own heart must condemn him.

Common sense decides the point, that no remission is granted to the unworthy receiver, who is, in fact,* no receiver at all; and an unworthy receiver he must ever be, who comes to the Sacrament with a design to be pardoned what is past, that he may begin the same evil course with fresh alacrity.—"All men," says the judicious Hooker, "receive not the grace of God who receive the Sacrament of his grace. A blind man cannot receive light when surrounded with it." A wicked man, still living in and retaining his known sins, cannot receive the Sacrament; he may receive the bread and wine, but to him they are not consecrated, they are no more than the common food at his daily meal.

The truth is, that men wicked enough to entertain such a notion never come to the Sacrament at all, unless from hypocrisy. Such men do not, and cannot believe in their hearts, that remission of sins is

* "Nam animalis homo, hoc est, qui sequitur cogitationes humanas et animales sive naturales, non est capax eorum, quæ sunt supra Naturam, et spiritualium; atque ita, et spiritualem esum carnis Dominicæ non intelligit; cujus qui non sunt participes, non erunt participes æternæ vitæ."

THEOPHYLACT. in Cap. Joan. 6.

annexed to it. They deride the idea. They commonly think not of any thing so serious and sacred as the Sacrament, except with an intention to degrade and ridicule it. If they did think of it, and really believed that they could obtain remission of sins by it, I have no doubt but that, in time, they would be completely reformed, and their sins would be forgiven them. They would be favoured by the grace of God; after which it is impossible that they could ever consider the Sacrament as a rite which was to ease them of the old burden of their sins, in order that they might have strength and spirits to load themselves once more with a new one. They would loathe their sins as the cause of their misery.

Repeated forgiveness upon repeated repentance, solemnly attested by an act, the most binding that can be devised, is perfectly consistent with the character of an all-merciful Deity, and not at all injurious to virtue, if the repentance be sincere; and if it be not, it is, in fact, no repentance, and will not be indulged with pardon, but punished as hypocrisy.

Repeated forgiveness upon repeated repentance appears to me so far from favouring vice, as to be a powerful incitement to virtue.

Does not the prospect of forgiveness on repentance naturally stimulate the mind to make an effort or the recovery of the peace of innocence, and the credit and comfort of virtue, by examining itself carefully, and using effectually the appointed means of grace? Would not wicked men be apt to go on in their wickedness, stifling their consciences, drowning all thought, and adding to their enormities, if they saw no hope of pardon, but thought they could not be in a worse condition, though, already deep as they are in the mire, they should plunge still deeper into the gulf of perdition.

Nothing, I think, can contribute more to making repentance sincere in the man who purposes to communicate, than a full persuasion that, if his repentance is not sincere, the Eucharist, instead of conveying remission of sins, will aggravate all that is past, add to it the horrid crime of being "guilty of the body and blood of Jesus Christ;" and by that means increase the danger and the severity of future condemnation.

After such solemn acts as those which a due participation of the Sacrament requires, a man of the least feeling and reflection, instead of growing careless, in consequence of the remission of his past sins, will be particularly attentive to his conduct, lest, on a relapse, he should not have grace to repent, and lest he should be cut off by death, before he can again become a worthy receiver. He will be watchful of his conduct, and take care not to deviate from the paths of virtue, a return to which he found attended with difficulty, requiring very painful efforts, and much self-denying resolution. He must know in his conscience, that a formal participation of the Sacrament is, in fact, no participation; and that to be a true penitent, especially after presumptuous sins, requires a change of mind which no rite, hypocritically performed, can produce.

An absolution is indeed pronounced in the Sacramental service, in the hearing of all communicants, whether worthy or unworthy: but this and all other absolutions in the liturgy are, in their nature, conditional. If there be no sincerity of faith and repentance in those who are thus absolved, there is no efficacy in the absolution. Forgiveness is only given to repentance; which is supposed in pronouncing the absolution.

But a man of an honest and good heart, who has

received the Sacrament worthily, rises, like one who has had a burden taken from his shoulders, pursues his journey in the path of religious virtue, with fresh cheerfulness and vigour, and, remembering how painful he found the weight of his sins, determines never to be encumbered with the like again; and the grace which he has received strengthens and refreshes his soul, so as to enable him, for the most part, to keep his resolution.

The privileges of the Sacrament are to be enjoyed only so long as they are not forfeited by subsequent transgression. "Circumcision verily profiteth," says the Apostle, if thou keep the law, but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision." The benefit of the Sacrifice itself on the cross was to be enjoyed only on the same condition. "Yet now hath he reconciled you, in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable in his sight, if ye continue in the faith, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel."*

"And, therefore, it is," says Bishop Cleaver, "that, in perfect consonance to the whole gospel dispensation, our church, in her Communion service, hath taught us to pray that God for Christ's sake will forgive us *all that is past*, and that *we may ever hereafter serve and please him in newness of life*; without which amendment this pardon will be withdrawn, and leave the sinner in the state of his prior guilt, with the aggravation of having abused additional means of grace: and, therefore, with an increase of condemnation.

"Now, from this representation of the matter, which has nothing in it of subtlety; no consequence can be drawn to the encouragement of vice; whilst

* Coloss. i. 22, 23.

it affords a solid and substantial comfort to the penitent. On the contrary, the doctrine is as wholesome as it is obvious; it renders habits of virtue necessary to all, whilst it supplies a mighty incitement to the sinner, 'by purging his conscience from dead works, to serve the living God;' and, by removing the weight of his present guilt, enables him cheerfully to 'run the race that is set before him,' and, with confidence, to aim at 'the prize of his high calling.'

"But in the present eagerness to depreciate the use and efficacy of this rite, it is probable we shall be still asked, of what need at all is a rite, the conditions of which, faith and repentance, are, in a general view, considered as of themselves effectual to procure salvation? Which question I shall answer by applying it to the other sacraments; what need is there of baptism? yet the injunction is, 'repent and be baptized.' One step farther: What need of any external means? Yet the Divine wisdom hath found them expedient in every religious dispensation. If the question could be asked by any sober inquirer, I should reply respecting both these sacraments, that they are necessary external means:

"First, to be the instituted expressions before God of our faith and repentance.

"Secondly, to be each as an offering of ourselves, of our souls and bodies, a pledge to him of our future obedience.

"Thirdly, to be pledges to us of God's acceptance.

"Fourthly, as solemn professions of our agreement in Christ; without which there can be no church communion.

"Fifthly, to remind us constantly, that all our hopes of pardon and acceptance rest upon the sacrifice of Christ's death."

"And would it not be reasonable to expect, that the religious use of rites of such importance, by their practical influence, might be, by Divine appointment, the means of deriving upon us the blessings of pardon and sanctification, in a degree beyond that annexed to the performance of any positive or moral duty whatever; even if we had not authority from Scripture for this conclusion?"*

The following observations of Bishop Kidder on this subject deserve our attention, as they are plain and decisive.

"Let not the sinner who lives in sin and loves it, think to obtain his pardon by partaking of this Sa-

* "The holy Sacrament operates indeed, and consigns or seals our pardon, yet not alone; but in conjunction with all which Christ requires as conditions of pardon; but when the conditions are present, the Sacrament ministers pardon; as pardon is ministered in this world; that is, by parts, and in order to several purposes, and with power of revocation; by suspending the Divine wrath; by procuring more graces; by obtaining time for repentance, and powers and possibilities of working out our salvation. For in the usual methods of God, pardon of sins is proportionable to our repentance, which, because it is all that state of purity we have in this whole life, after our first sin; pardon of sins is all that effect of grace, which is consequent to that repentance; and the worthy receiving of the Holy Communion is but one conjugation (or article) of holy actions and parts of repentance; but indeed it is the best and the noblest; and such, in which man does best cooperate towards pardon; and in which the grace of God does most illustriously consign or seal it." Bishop Taylor.

"We must be infinitely careful to remember that even the death of Christ brings no pardon to the impenitent, persevering sinner; and the sacrament of Christ's death cannot do more than the death itself; and therefore let no man come with his guilt about him and hope to find his pardon by this ministry." Bishop Taylor.

Qui scelerate vivunt in Ecclesiâ, et communicare non desinunt, putantes se tali communione mundari, discant nihil ad emundationem proficere. Isidor. Hispalensis, *de summo Bono.*

Nunquid carnes sanctæ auferent à te malitias tuas?—Jer. xi. 15.—The English translation differs from the Latin.

crament. This Sacrament will not avail such a man, for the death of Christ will not avail him if he lives in his sins and loves them; and therefore this Sacrament can avail him nothing, it being but the annunciation of the death of Christ: It cannot avail the sinner whom the death of our Lord does not avail. It is a vain thing for such a sinner to take sanctuary here. If there be not in our souls a principle of new life, it is not the outward elements of bread and wine that will help us. God is ready to forgive us our sins; and we may see it clearly in this Sacrament, but while we love our sins, we are incapable of this grace. It is the burdened and the laden sinner that shall find this favour. It is he that hates his sin and strives against it. These are those whom Christ came to seek and to save. It is not the outward work that will save us, if there be not in us the grace of God. There is no pardon in the gospel for the obdurate and impenitent sinner; and therefore we may not look for it in any of the exterior offices of religion. He that comes to the Sacrament in his sins with hopes of a pardon for his former guilt, will contract a greater; and instead of preventing will but increase and enhance his own condemnation."

SECTION XVII.

The Clause in the Lord's Prayer, "Give us this Day our daily Bread," has a Reference to the Eucharist; and the Clause, "Forgive us our Trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us," a similar Reference; both together include the two great Benefits annexed to the Sacrament, GRACE, AND THE REMISSION OF SINS.

THE depreciators of the Eucharist have maintained, among other strange and conceited opinions, that the

prayers, hymns, and thanksgivings contained in our Communion service have no real connection with the Sacrament; which, according to them, consists merely of eating the bread, and drinking the wine, in commemoration of our Lord's death and passion. But I hope to make it appear, that our Lord himself appointed a prayer which, though it might be properly used on other occasions, was particularly intended by him for the celebration of the Lord's supper. If I can prove this point, I think I shall also prove, that our Saviour himself has evidently shown the nature of the benefits which are annexed to the sacrament of the Lord's supper.

The Greek epithet* to bread in the Lord's prayer, translated "daily," is a word peculiar to the Evangelists; and never found, as Origen observes, either in Greek authors, or in colloquial language. The meaning of it is not yet fixed to the entire satisfaction of men who are best able to judge of points like these; but, whatever may be its meaning, it most undoubtedly does not signify "daily." How came we then to say, give us this day our daily bread? An old translator, not knowing how to render the word *Epiousios*, inserted at a venture the epithet daily; and subsequent translators, equally ignorant, continued to use the same word, under the sanction of the first mistake; our Bible and liturgy retained the error, for the same reason, and the prayer is to this day repeated by millions in a sense never intended by the Divine author.

Some of the ancients, and particularly JEROM, translated the epithet *Epiousios*, "supersubstantial,† and superessential," instead of "daily," and at this

* ΕΠΙΟΥΣΙΟΣ.

† Qui super omnes substantias est et universas superat creaturas. MARTINII Lexicon.

hour it stands so translated in the Vulgate Bible, for ages the only Bible of the people.

JEROM, commenting on the eleventh verse of the sixth chapter of St. Matthew, in which is contained the petition for bread, says, "I have consulted the Hebrew, and wherever the Septuagint have used περιουσιος, I find סגלה, which Symmachus has rendered εξαιρετον, that is, select, or singularly excellent;" therefore whenever we pray God to give us this singular and excellent bread, (he seems to think περιουσιος synonimous with επιουσιος,) which we do when we pray for *Artos Epiousios*, (translated daily bread,) we pray for that bread which he declares himself to be, when he says in St. John, "I am the living bread, which came down from heaven."

Athanasius, in his Treatise on the Incarnation, informs us that the Holy Ghost elsewhere calls it the heavenly bread, saying, "Give us this day our daily bread (*Epiousion;*) for he has taught us in this prayer to ask in the present life for the *Epiousion* bread: that is, for the future bread, the bread of heaven, the bread which is to be our food in a future state, the first-fruits or foretaste of which we have in the present life, by sacramentally partaking of the flesh of our Lord."

Bishop Pearce, remarking on these passages, says, "The sense given to the word *Epiousios* by Athanasius and Jerom seems to be the more probable, because no other part of this prayer has any relation to a bodily want; and this sense of the word comes most naturally after the other petitions." I beg the reader's attention to this circumstance, that no other part of this prayer has any relation to a bodily want. This petition therefore comes in very abruptly and unconnectedly.

Ambrosius, in the fifth Book of his Treatise on

Sacrifices, says, "The bread spoken of in the Lord's prayer is the supersubstantial bread; not that bread which passes into the body, but the bread of eternal life, which supports the existence of our souls, and is therefore called in the Greek, Epiousios." In another treatise, (that on Faith,*) he says, it is called Epiousios, or supersubstantial, because it supplies an emanation of divine influence on our souls and bodies.

Damascenus says,† that the body of Christ, which is received in the Sacrament, enters (εἰ στην ΟΥΣΙΑΝ,) into the very nature and essence of our souls. It is therefore called *Epiousios.*

Cyril of Alexandria asserts, "that by (*Artos Epiousios*) translated 'daily bread,' is to be understood Christ, the spiritual bread; because we are commanded by Christ himself to pray for nothing carnal, but for every thing divine and spiritual."

Germanus says, as quoted by Suicerus, "The bread, called in the Lord's prayer *Epiousios,* is CHRIST, (Ο ΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΠΡΟ ΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΜΕΝΩΝ ΕΙΣ ΑΙΩΝΑΣ,) *who is existence itself; who existed before the world,* and *will exist for ever.*" Theophylact says, ("ΤΟ ΣΩΜΑ ΤΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ ΑΡΤΟΣ ΕΣΤΙΝ ΕΠΙΟΥΣΙΟΣ.) The body of Christ is the *Artos Epiousios,* the daily bread in the Lord's prayer."‡ A strong confirmation of the opinion, that it has a reference to the sacramental bread.

Cyprian says, "We call it our bread in this prayer, because Christ, as we Christians appertain to his body, is our bread. We pray that this bread may be given us every day, that we who are in

* Ambros. de Fide, lib. 37.

† In Epistola ad Zachariam Episcopum.

‡ Καὶ τὸ σωμα δε του ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΟΥ *αρτος εστι* ΕΠΙΟΥΣΙΟΣ *ου μεταλαμβανειν ευχομεθα.*—Theophyl. in Matt. vi.

Christ, and receive the Eucharist every day, as the food necessary to our health, may not be compelled by sin to abstain from communicating, and thus be separated from the body of Christ; and again, "We pray that our bread may be daily given us; that is, that Christ may be daily given us." St. Cyprian also says, "There are several great sacraments (mysteries) in the Lord's prayer;" evidently intimating, that it was not to be understood in its literal sense, but had a sublime signification in those parts which appear to be most familiar.

Tertullian observes, that, "Though we pray, saying, 'Give us this day our daily bread,' yet this ought to be spiritually understood; because Christ is our bread. By asking daily bread, we ask for continuance in Christ, and never (no not for a day) to be separated from his mystical body."

Augustine, in his Letters to Proba, observes nearly the same things: and they all found their opinion on our Saviour's denominating himself bread, in the sixth chapter of St. John; so that if bread in that chapter has a reference to the Eucharist, which I hope has been proved, then bread in this prayer, I should think, must undoubtedly have the same reference.

Many of the ancients seem to think with Cyprian, that in repeating the fourth clause in the Lord's prayer, (the petition for daily bread,) an emphasis should be laid on the word our. It signified, as they intimate, our particular bread; ours as Christians, in distinction from common bread; our bread, "ours," as belonging to the mystical body of Christ; ours as fed by an emanation of his Spirit from Heaven, as the Children of Israel were nourished by manna.

I shall now beg leave to translate this part of the petition thus: Give us this day the bread of life;

or, Give us this day the bread necessary to our spiritual existence. I need not explain to the learned my reasons for interpreting (επιουσιον) the epithet applied to bread in the Greek, the bread of life, or the bread necessary to spiritual existence; for I believe every candid scholar will allow, from the etymology of the word, that it admits of that interpretation, more easily and properly than of any other.

But why do I add the epithet to the word existence, spiritual? This certainly remains to be accounted for. I have no objection to transferring the epithet to the word bread, and then the passage will run: Give us this day our spiritual bread; but, in its present situation, it conveys the meaning completely. I have only to justify, if I can, such a construction.

Our Saviour frequently uses the word bread in a figurative sense, for spiritual sustenance. "I am the bread of life. The bread that I will give is my flesh; except ye eat of this flesh, ye have no life in you;" that is, no *ousia*, no spiritual existence. Therefore this bread is necessary (*epiousian*) to your spiritual existence, the life of your immaterial part.

In general, therefore, it may be observed, that the bread prayed for in the Lord's prayer is the bread which Christ speaks of, when he says, "I am the bread of life;" and signifies that divine influence on the soul of man, that aliment from heaven which feeds and sustains the Christian life.

In particular, the bread prayed for in the Lord's prayer refers to that bread which was afterwards to be eaten, till our Lord's second coming, by the faithful at the Eucharistical feast, or the feast on the sacrifice of Christ; that bread which was to consti-

tute the food or nourishment of the soul in the sacrament of the Lord's supper; namely, the Holy Spirit's influence, or Divine grace.

Our Saviour, I have no doubt, appointed this prayer with a particular view to the celebration of the Eucharist, which he soon after instituted; and Christians, guided by tradition from the Apostles, in the earliest times of Christianity, applied the Lord's prayer, almost exclusively to the sacrament of the Lord's supper, which was then received every day; and which constituted the principal part, if not the whole, of the divine service among the primitive Christians. They met for no other purpose.

The Lord's prayer was, at that time called the Prayer of the Faithful (ΕΥΧΗ ΤΩΝ ΠΙΣΤΩΝ,) and by the epithet faithful was understood those who had received baptism, in contradistinction to the catechumens, who were only in a state of instruction preparatory to baptism. After the common prayers, and just before the administration of the elements, the deacon proclaimed aloud in the church, "Depart hence, all those who are only catechumens, or in a state of preparatory instruction; but all who come under the title of (ΟΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΙ) the faithful, are to remain; and let us pray to the Lord in peace." Those alone that were thus admitted to the Eucharist were allowed to say the Lord's prayer, because they only could with propriety pray, in the fourth clause, for (*Artos Epiousios*) the bread of life.* The prayer

* Non poterant Dominicam orationem recitare (catechumeni) quia verba petitionis quartæ τον αρτον ημων επιουσιον δος ημιν σημερον ab OMNIBUS POENE DE EUCHARISTIA explicabantur; cujus mysterii, cum nondum potuerint esse participes, AMYHTOI frustra hanc petitionem recitassent.

Vide Albaspinœi, lib. i. obs. 19. et Suiceri Lex, in voc: *Euche.*

was denominated from this circumstance the prayer of the faithful, or of confirmed Christians. It was confined to their use, and was daily repeated immediately after the consecration of the elements, by all who were assembled to communicate, and by none else.

It is wonderful that the word bread, in the Lord's prayer, has been so generally understood to signify common food.* It would be quite as reasonable to understand the next, or fifth clause of debts literally, as meaning debts of money (*æs alienum*,) as the fourth clause, of bread, (*victus*,) food or victuals. But all seem to have agreed in rendering οφειληματα (debts in the Greek,) trespasses and sins; that debts to God and not to man. St. Luke indeed explains St. Matthew's debts by αμαρτιας, sins; but he retains the original idea of debts by retaining in the next part of the sentence (οφειλοντι) "as we forgive our debtor;" and even the word αμαρτιας, sins, is οφειληματα, debts, in the Cambridge manuscript, according to the very learned Dr. Mill.

Perhaps nobody will object to the opinion that bread in the gospel stands for the word of God, the grace of God, and the doctrines and precepts of our Saviour. But many will be ready to say, that as the Sacrament was not instituted when the Lord's prayer was prescribed, nothing contained in it can have a reference to a subsequent institution.

That this common objection is destitute of force, may be proved by what has already been said in

* Ου γαρ ως κοινον αρτον λαμβανομεν.—Justin Martyr Apol. ii.
† Cor. xi. 21.

Oratio illa nihil terrenum habet, sed omnia cælestia, et ad animum tendentia.

This prayer has nothing in it that has any reference to earthly matters; but is wholly of celestial tendency, and appertains to the wants of the mind. *Isidor: Pelusio. Epist.*

applying the passages of the sixth chapter of St. John to the Eucharist, which was not instituted till a year or two after they were uttered. Our Lord, whose prophetic mind looked forward into futurity with more ease than we can recal the scenes and events that are past, could have no difficulty in adapting the words of the prayer to the future purposes of a most important, though not yet established solemnity: a rite, which was to perpetuate the memory of his death and passion, and to be the means of conveying their benefits, in all ages, to his faithful and penitent followers. It may be said that his disciples could not understand the words completely previously to the institution: but his disciples, it is acknowledged, frequently did not understand him, neither did he intend that they always should, till after his ascension. His disciples had not the gift of prophecy, nor could they understand him, where he says, "The son of man shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and they shall scourge him, and put him to death, and the third day he shall rise again. They understood none of these things, and this saying was hid from them; neither knew they the things which were spoken."

But will any be absurd enough to say that Christ could not, in these words, allude to his resurrection, because they were spoken before his resurrection?

Again he says: "What and if ye shall see the son of man ascend up whither he was before?" Will any man say he could not refer to his ascension, because he had not yet ascended?

Is it then absurd to suppose, in several passages, where he mentions the bread which was to give life, spiritual life, that he intimates to his disciples the Eucharistical institution, which was not then instituted; but which he intended afterwards to ordain?

To understanding the bread mentioned in the Lord's prayer, as referring to the Sacrament, there can be no objection from the circumstance of the institution of the Sacrament having been posterior to the prescription of the prayer. Our Saviour, it appears, alluded to several other things, in the same way, before they happened, and before they were, or could be, understood by his disciples; who were the more struck with them, when, in due time, they were fully disclosed by the event. The prophecy confirmed their faith.

"These things understood not his disciples at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him."*

The other petitions of this prayer are of a spiritual and sublime nature. The harmony of the whole, if I may so express it, requires that this petition for bread also should be spiritual and sublime. It is a very sudden transition from praying that God's "kingdom may come, and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven," immediately to supplicate for daily bread, for the meat that perisheth; especially as our Saviour says, "Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth unto everlasting life. Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat and what ye shall drink; the life is more than meat. Therefore, take no thought, saying, what shall we eat, for your Heavenly father knoweth that ye have need of these things; but seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."† Did he who said this teach us to pray for daily bread, the food that perisheth?

In conformity to both Scripture and reason, I

* John, xii. 16. † Matt. vi. 33; Luke, xii. 31.

therefore would alter the translation of the fourth petition in the Lord's prayer, and read, instead of "give us this day our daily bread;"—"give us this day the bread of life, the bread necessary to our spiritual existence; that is, vouchsafe unto us nourishment to our souls, the influence of the Holy Spirit: without which, though our animal part may vegetate, we are assured by thy Son our Saviour, there is no life in us; none of that life which assimilates us to the divine, and which, through thy mercy, will conduct us to life eternal. Therefore we beseech thee to feed us with such spiritual food this day, and every day; but more particularly when we come to thy table, and take the material bread in remembrance that Christ died for us, and feed on it in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving."

It appears to me, that this mode of interpretation adds greatly to the sublimity and significancy of the Lord's prayer; and at the same time gives us reason to expect the bread of life in the instituted rite of the Eucharist; which has been called by divines of the first character, as I have before observed, the sacrament of nutrition. The clause means then, in its true sense, as follows, "Leave us not destitute of the bread that comes down from heaven, without which whosoever liveth is dead before thee." This clause then refers to the benefit of grace.

With respect to the next clause in this most interesting prayer: "And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us," I know not that divines have considered it as particularly and intentionally referring to the other great benefit annexed to the Holy communion, the remission of sins; but as it appears, from what has been already advanced in this section, that the fourth clause, and indeed the whole of the prayer was, with great

appearance of reason, appropriated by the first Christians to the Sacrament; I have no hesitation in saying, that this fifth clause also may have a particular and intentional reference to the remission of sins, annexed to the worthy reception of the Eucharistical elements. It is placed next in order to the petition for the bread of life, or grace; and the juxta-position and connection by a copulative conjunction, induce me to think that our Saviour meant to combine, in these two clauses, the two great benefits of the Sacrament, grace and pardon. This interpretation of both clauses appears to me to display a connection, a harmony, a beauty, and an importance in the prayer, adequate to the dignity of its Divine author.

But the limitation of the meaning to bread in the literal sense, a meaning not authorized by the Greek word Epiousios; a meaning, which does not harmonize with the sublimity and spirituality of the other petitions, seems to me unauthorized by reason, unsupported by the original, and derogatory from the exalted purpose of the prayer, which, in my opinion, is all spiritual, and comprehends not the wants of animal nature.*

SECTION XVIII.

Further Considerations on understanding the Petition for Bread, in the Lord's Prayer, to mean the Bread of Life, spoken of in St. John's Sixth Chapter,—that is, the Bread of the Eucharist; or the Divine Influence.

In their journey through the wilderness, the Jews had been fed from Heaven with manna: it was per-

* Precandi forma ab ipso Christo præscripta, mirâ verborum paucitate, sex septemve concisa membris, MAGNA MYSTERIA complectitur. STUCKII Antiq. Conviv.

fectly natural, therefore, that a people, on whom so miraculous a supply must have made a deep and indelible impression, should give the name of bread from heaven to all influence and assistance which they believed divine. It is no wonder that our Saviour, addressing a people whose minds were so strongly impressed with the idea of heavenly food, should call the celestial favours, which he had to bestow on them, by the name of bread; a figure, strong indeed, but a figure which, from its familiarity to their minds, almost ceased to be figurative. No wonder he taught them to pray for spiritual or heavenly succours, under the name of bread, that manna which their forefathers received from Heaven, at once nourishing their bodies and confirming their faith. He condescended to assume the very name himself, (alluding to the sustenance which came down from Heaven) and to say, "I am the Bread of Life." To the minds of the jews there could be nothing harsh in this metaphor: it was their perverseness only which led them to understand the term in the gross and literal sense. They could not, without peculiar tardiness or perverseness, misunderstand the word bread in the prayer of our Lord; because it was accompanied with an epithet (rendered from the Hebrew *Epiousios*) which at once showed that it was to be considered as the food necessary to spiritual existence; since *ousia*, whence the epithet is derived, is not the proper word for the life of the body, but the life of the soul; pure being, or existence.

And this leads me to a further consideration of the epithet *Epiousios*, which I translate, "necessary for spiritual essence or existence." The word OUSIA from which it derives its meaning, signifies, BEING, ESSENCE; not temporary life, like that of the body, but pure indissoluble essence; the essence of the

soul, and of the Deity, who was accordingly called by the word, from which *ousia* is immediately derived, o ΩN—I am; that is, pure essence, not subject to mortality, but existing from everlasting to everlasting independently of HYLE or MATTER.

The ARTOS EPIOUSIOS, in the Lord's prayer, is a participation of this bread of life, this Divine essence. According to Anastasius and Cyrillus, ΟΥΣΙΑ εστι πραγμα ανΘυπαρκτον, μη δεομενον ετερου προς την εαυτου συστασιν. OUSIA, *Essence, is that which exists from itself unindebted to any other for its subsistence.* IT is TO ON, PURE BEING.

But supposing for a moment, which I cannot however admit, that *Epiousios* is derived from επιων, it will then signify *future*, that bread which we are hereafter to have in heaven. There seems to be an antithesis between σημερον and επιουσιον, which is the only thing in my mind that favours this interpretation. It may then be translated thus: "Give us this day a foretaste of that bread which is reserved for us in a future." Allowing this to be the true translation, as some learned men have thought, the sense will still be equally favourable to my interpretation of spiritual bread, or divine grace: "Give us now on earth that spiritual bread which in heaven is to be the food of our souls hereafter." It cannot be understood of to-morrow's bread, as some have interpreted it;—for it seems absurd to say, give us this day the bread of to-morrow. And, besides, our Saviour has expressly said, "Take no thought for the morrow, neither what ye shall eat, nor what ye shall drink; for your heavenly Father knoweth ye have need of all these things;" and (as must be intended) will mercifully supply them without your prayer or solicitude.

If *Epiousios* were properly translated *daily*, in St.

Luke, where the prayer is differently worded, the petition would run thus: "Give us daily our daily bread," which would be a tautology; but "Give us from day to day that heavenly bread, which is necessary to sustain the spiritual life bestowed as the peculiar privilege of Christ's religion," is a petition which elevates the mind with sublime devotion; and of a piece with the whole form of supplication.

This spiritual food, there is no doubt, is given to them who ask it with faith and true penitence, EVERY DAY. "If ye," says our Saviour, "being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." And he himself has taught us to ask our Father, our heavenly Father, for the Holy Spirit in the form prescribed, under the figurative appellation of bread. But it is to be believed that larger portions of grace are bestowed by a rite of his own institution, when worthily performed, than by prayer alone.

Christ has instituted and ordained a holy mystery as a pledge of his love; in which, while we worthily receive the created food and refreshment, bread and wine, according to his institution, in remembrance of his death and passion, we become partakers of his most blessed body and blood, that is, his Divine nature, emanating into our very souls, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, and feeding them from time to time, as they may require new strength and refreshment. We there receive the *artos epiousios*, the Bread of Life.

The Oriental people, it is well known, expressed their religious ideas by strong figures originally borrowed, perhaps, from HIEROGLYPHICS. The words bread, body, flesh, and blood, used for spiritual sustenance, or improvement of the soul in divine

virtue, did not sound uncouth to them, because they were used to similar modes of expression, not only in their sacrifices, but in the general style of Oriental poetry. Happy they who are not offended with these or any other difficulties, which previous to due examination, may appear to attend the divine doctrines of our Redeemer; but which vanish on consideration of ancient times, places, manners, institutions, and figurative or hieroglyphical modes of expression. Happy they, who with pious simplicity, ask and receive, whether in the common communications of grace, or the more particular ones of the Eucharist. "abundance of the bread of life, and the meat that perisheth not." They shall grow with such aliment, "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."*

The following passages seem to confirm the opinions contained in the Sections "on the Reference of the Lord's prayer to the Eucharist:"

ΟΥΣΙΑ est essentia, et secundum quosdam, etiam substantia. Ουσια pro ENTE et UNO. Cicero in Platonis Timæo, ουσιαν vertit materiam, et tum επιουσιος significat super materiam—above every thing material.

Cicero, pro ουσια, dixit potius "natura;" ut annotat Budæus,—επιουσιος est ignitur supernaturalis.

Exponitur ουσια etiam VIS VITALIS.

Επιουσιος, apud Suidam, ο επι τη ουσια ημων αρμοζων. *Panis nobis sustentandis idoneus;* quæ interpretatio, ait Henricus Stephanus, aptissimum quidem sensum habet (hoc in loco) sed *similis* significationis nominis "ουσια," *Exemplum* DESIDERO.

Quidam, in prece dominicâ, επιουσιον, substantialem, alii supersubstantialem, reddiderunt cum veteri interprete, seu superessentialem: Fuerunt et qui *eximium* seu *egregium* verterint,—NON VULGAREM PANEM; sed EXIMIUM ILLUM QUI DE CÆLO MITTITUR. HEN. STEPH. Lex. in Voc. Ουσια.

Ambrosius, lib. v. de Sacrificiis: "Panis επιουσιος, hoc est, *substantialis:*" non est iste panis, qui vadit in corpus, sed ille

* Ephes. iv. 13.

PANIS VITÆ ÆTERNÆ, qui animæ nostræ substantiam fulcit: ideo Græce επιουσιος, dicitur.

Idem de Fide, lib. xxxvii. Επιουσιος panis dicitur; quòd ex verbi substantiâ substantiam virtutis manantis corpori et animæ, subministret.

Damascenus, in Epist. ad Zach. Episcopum, ait, CORPUS CHRISTI, quod in Sacramento accipitur, εις συστασιν και εις την ΟΥΣΙΑΝ της ψυχης ἡμων χωρειν, in constitutionem et naturam aut substantiam animæ nostræ vadere.

Sedulius understands the "Bread" in the Lord's prayer to mean spiritual food, as appears by his verses here following:

"Annonam fidei speramus PANE DIURNO,
Ne mens nostra FAMEM DOCTRINÆ sentiat unquam,
A Christo JEJUNA suo, qui corpore et ore
Nos saturat, simul ipse manens VERBUMQUE CIBUSQUE."

Juvencius, de Hist. Evan. i 598, translates the clause in the Lord's prayer concerning "Bread," according to the interpretation I have endeavoured to support.

"VITALISQUE hodiè SANCTI substantia panis proveniat nobis."

Athanasius understands the *Epiousian Bread* in the Lord's prayer, to mean a foretaste (in the Eucharist,) or the first fruits of that FUTURE BREAD which is to be the heavenly food in another life.

"Αλλαχου το ΑΓΙΟΝ ΠΝΕΥΜΑ καλει ΑΡΤΟΝ ΕΠΟΥΡΑΝΙΟΝ, λεγων 'τον αρτον ημων επιουσιον δος ημιν σημερον.' Εδιδαξε γαρ ημας, εν τη ευχη, εν τω νυν αιωνι, αιτειν τον επιουσιον αρτον· τουτ' εστιν, τον ΜΕΛΛΟΝΤΑ, ου απαρχην εχομεν εν τη νυν ζωη, της σαρκος του Κυριου μεταλαμβανοντες."

It is certain that the early writers, almost unanimously, explained what we translate "daily Bread" in the Lord's prayer, as the Corpus Christi, emblematically received in the Eucharist. They understood it as a petition for daily supplies of grace, spiritual aliment, or the benign influence of the Holy Spirit. It was the primitive practice to take the Sacrament daily; and hence perhaps, the phrase, "DAILY BREAD."

SECTION XIX.

The Expressions of Body and Blood, as used by our Saviour, in the Institution of this Ordinance, not harsh and uncouth Figures to those who consider the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper as a Feast on a Sacrifice.

If the Lord's supper be a feast on a sacrifice, as I think it is proved to be, the expressions of eating the body and drinking the blood of our Saviour, that is, of the victim sacrificed, are not only in a high degree significant, but in every respect, the most eligible that could have been used, because the most appropriate.*

Whatever figure conveys the true idea of the speaker's mind, in the liveliest manner possible, so as to paint an image on the hearer's mind, and to effect what Quintilian calls an ENARGEIA, is an elegance. This beautiful figure of rhetoric renders

* Things are apta facta, et apta nata: apta facta are all such things, whether real or nominal, or notional, as have their signification from the outward consent of them that impose this aptness. As I know, when I hear the names London, York, or Dublin, what places are, and what places are not, signified and meant. Why? How comes my conception to fasten upon such a city, upon the mention of such a name? Surely from no natural aptness in the names to signify one city rather than another; but by institution and consent, or custom; which is as good as a natural aptness to describe such a place. Men will so call it; and therefore such a name becomes apt to each place respectively.

Thus God made bread and wine apt to express the body and blood of Christ in the Sacrament of his ordinance. Though these things have indeed some resemblance or congruity with the things signified, because one is a liquid and the other a solid, corresponding with the blood and the body, and because both strengthen and refresh the body, as grace strengthens and refreshes the soul. The appropriation here has a natural as well as an instituted aptness to resemble the things signified.

ROGERS on the Sacrament, 1635.

what is addressed to the ears an object of mental vision.* It represents things so much to the life, that they seem to be going on before the eyes, and not merely described by language. It forms a vivid picture on the retina of the mind, if I may use the expression; and not only delineates the object more clearly, but causes it to be more easily remembered. Things sensible are often not only the best but the only means of explaining, in a lively manner, things spiritual and intellectual.

It is one of the most admired kinds of the ENARGEIA not to describe a thing fully and circumstantially, but to select one or two of the most striking parts, which at once give the reader or hearer a strong and clear impression of the whole. Brevity adds to vivacity, one of the chief beauties of all eloquence.*

"Take, eat, this is my body.—This is my blood; drink ye all of it."

Though these words have, in modern times, sounded strangely to the ears of some, yet they were perfectly intelligible to those who heard them, and conveyed the speaker's mind with singular force. Those who heard them expressed no surprise at them. They knew that they referred to a feast on a sacrifice; and this was an emphatic mode of ordering it to consist of the elements of bread and wine,

* Την ακοην οψιν ποιει. LONGINUS.

† "Ornatum est quod perspicuo et probabili plus est.—Itaque Εναργειαν, quia plus est evidentia, vel, ut alii dicunt, repræsentatio quam perspicuitas, (et illud quidem patet, hæc se quodammodo ostendit,) inter ornamenta ponamus. Magna virtus est, res, de quibus loquimur ut cerni videantur, enuntiare; non enim satis efficit, neque, ut debet, plene dominatur oratio, si usque ad aures volet, atque ea sibi judex, de quibus cognoscit, narrari credit, non exprimi et oculis mentis ostendi."

QUINTILIAN, lib. viii. cap. 3.

in the place of the victim, which, in this case, could not for a moment be supposed, in a literal sense, to constitute the holy repast. The idea of cannibalism would have been shocking to the feelings of humanity, and cannot even now be contemplated but with abhorrence. Those who were present saw real bread and real wine in the Institutor's hand; they took them from his hand without surprise, when told that they were his body and his blood; because they knew he meant to establish a sacrificial feast, in analogy to their passover; in which the paschal lamb was actually eaten by those who were to receive the benefits of the sacrifice; and the feast was necessary to complete the sacrifice.*

* "This reference to the customs and opinions of the times was useful by impressing on the religion so circumstanced one indelible mark of truth, for the use of all ages. Had that religion pretending to have arisen in a remote age, brought down with it no tincture of the times, we might have reason to suspect or disbelieve the traditional accounts which informed us of its high antiquity.

"But when we find upon it so strong a mark as *ancientry*; and impressed in a manner to cause no suspicion, and in a manner so sure, as to afford no handle for imposture; we may be confident it is of the times it pretends to be.

"Again: this restrained peculiarity serves a still further and greater end. It is contrived to be declarative of the true nature of the death and sufferings of Christ. That his death on the cross was a sacrifice for the sins of the world, has been always held a part of Catholic faith, founded on the express declaration of Scripture. But those sects, who oppose the doctrine of a real Redemption, have always striven to evade the notion of a real Sacrifice, as that on which the doctrine of Redemption is founded, upon pretence that the Scripture expressions of Christ's sacrifice, were only figurative and allusory. Now, if the Last Supper, the rite which commemorates the death of Christ, be of the nature of the feasts upon sacrifice, it is self-evident that the death itself was a real sacrifice, and not merely called so, by conversion of terms or accommodation of ideas."

Bishop WARBURTON.

I will, with due humility, attempt to explain the terms to modern apprehensions in a liberal paraphrase.

"You and your forefathers, as well as the Gentile world, have been for ages sacrificing animals, as your most solemn act of devotion, with a hope of partaking of benefits from the propitiated Deity, by sharing in the sacrificial feast, which the victim supplied; all these sacrifices were types and adumbrations of the grand Sacrifice, to be offered up for all mankind, to-morrow, by the oblation of myself on the cross.

"In this instance, for obvious reasons, I celebrate the sacrificial feast with you before the sacrifice. I celebrate it with you in person, in order to give you my example and my command, in what manner you, and all that follow me, are to celebrate it after my death on the cross; after my oblation of myself, when all sacrifices shall cease, and nothing shall remain but the feast on the sacrifice, in which all who partake worthily shall be partakers of the benefits of the Sacrifice once made for you, and for all, never afterwards to be repeated.

"But in this feast which I now institute, there can be no real blood, no real flesh, as was the case when you partook of the slaughtered animal in the former typical sacrifices; for the victim, in the present case, is not one of the animals, is not literally a lamb, but myself, whose body will shortly ascend to heaven, and become glorified.

"I therefore ordain a feast, emblematical of my body and blood. I appoint the two great supplies of strength and nourishment, bread and wine, to stand in the place of the sacrificed victim; but they, duly received, shall produce the same benefits on you as you would have expected in your former sacrifices,

when you actually fed on a real lamb, the offered victim; and I call them, because in effect and virtue they are the same, my body and my blood. Do not suppose for a moment, that this is not to all intents and purposes a sacrificial feast on the sacrifice of myself; but take this bread; for given thus, it is, and shall be in effect, my body; drink this wine, and it shall prove to you, in its mysterious benefits, the real blood of the victim, that is, of myself, to be offered up on the morrow, on the cross as on an altar. The bread and wine are still but created things, emblems only and symbols; yet by my ordinance, they shall constitute, till my second coming, the feast on this last great sacrifice, and convey the benefits of it to all faithful and penitent partakers."

Thus understood, there appears the greatest propriety in the words, "Ye shall eat my body and drink my blood."*

No mode of enunciation could have been so forcible, none so immediately adapted to point out their reference to an actual sacrifice. If he had said, you shall eat bread and drink wine after I am departed, in remembrance of your friend and benefactor, the duty indeed had been indispensable, and would have formed a pleasing exercise of gratitude. But we might have done the same for any other friend and benefactor, with no other benefit than the conscious-

* "The verily and indeed taking of what is called by our church an inward and spiritual grace, must denote that the devout communicant does actually receive the benefits understood in the gospel by the figure of eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ; that is, the confirming our trust and faith in his name, the quickening our remembrance of all he has done and suffered for us; which will naturally help and strengthen our disposition to virtuous and good actions, refresh our languid hopes in the administration of Providence, and rekindle our cooling charity towards our fellow-creatures." TUCKER, vol. vi. p. 113.

ness of grateful behaviour, and the pleasure of dwelling on the goodness of the departed. But by the words body and blood, we have the idea of a sacrifice for sinners; of the Supreme Being propitiated by it (according to the ideas then prevailing all over the world;) of atonement made; and all the benefits of Christ's precious blood-shedding, emphatically pointed out, "to our great and endless comfort."

To a people among whom sacrifices were familiar, the terms of eating the body of the victim, could not be repellent. The Jews, indeed, abstained from blood; but the institution of the Eucharist was not to be confined to the Jews, but in a short time extended to all people who should call on the name of Jesus, Gentiles as well as Jews; to whom sacrificial feasts, without any prohibition from blood, were familiar modes of conciliating the Deity, and of deriving protection and every other blessing from Heaven; therefore the introduction of a feast on a sacrifice was the easiest and most probable method of introducing, to the Gentile world, the Christian religion."*

* "Our Saviour did not institute a rite altogether new to the world: but accommodated this solemnity to the ordinary and vulgar apprehensions of all mankind, in that age." PELLING.

Certè non in hoc tantùm, sed et in Baptismi Sacramento, videtur omnino Christus se non Hebræorum tantùm, sed et gentium, in idem fœdus cooptandarum, captui accommodasse. GROTIUS.

SECTION XX.

Of the true Knowledge of Christ attained in worthily receiving the Sacrament, by the unlearned and well-disposed Christian.

THERE were two trees in Paradise, the tree of knowledge and the tree of life; and if there were two such trees in the present age, many of the sons of Adam, like himself, would be most anxiously engaged in shaking the boughs of the tree of knowledge, while, thus occupied, they would wholly neglect the tree of life.

It is, indeed, a great misfortune that many teachers are trained to the profession of divinity, not so much by an early study of the Scriptures, or by devotional exercises; not so much by the Evangelists and Apostles, as by the Rule of Three and Practice, by Cocker's Arithmetic, Euclid's Elements, and Maclaurin's Algebra; the only things studied by many, as preparatory to the first academical degree, immediately after which holy orders are taken; as if religion, which alone they are to profess for life, were matter of science entirely, whereas it is chiefly matter of faith. Science or certain knowledge, is different in its very nature from faith, which can exist only where science, or certain knowledge, is unattainable. Faith is no longer faith, the moment it becomes certain science.

It is to be attributed to the early intellectual habits of some among the students in theology who receive holy orders, without having had time to attend closely to any thing but mathematics, that they are willing to assent to nothing but what is nearly demonstrable, and explain away every thing myste-

rious or irreconcilable to their preconceived notions of truth and rectitude. This tendency would in some instances lead directly to Socinianism or infidelity, were it not checked by a desire not to be thrown out of the secular benefits annexed to an established religion.

Mathematics, and all the recondite sciences, are useful and honourable attainments; but they do not teach Jesus Christ; they have but little connection with theology. I must on this delicate topic rely on authority.

"It may be hazardous," says Bishop Horne, "to assign the causes of error upon speculation. It is well known that most of our enlightened reasoners, who take the highest liberties with the faith of a Trinity in unity, have been bred in those schools where the sciences, which are conversant about quantities, claim a superior if not an exclusive excellence. In their place they are excellent, and give absolute certainty; but in religion, being out of place, they must of course turn into vain deceit. Let us, therefore, most humbly wish it to be well considered by those whom it may concern, that mathematicians, merely as such, have, in religion, no preeminence above other men; that mathematical analogies are not transferable to morality, theology, politics, nor to any science which is conversant only with the qualities of things."

Because this subject is tender, and may possibly irritate a very irritable sort of men, those who pride themselves on their physical and metaphysical, and mathematical improvements, I must beg leave not to speak in my own words on this occasion, but in those of an author whom the mathematical theologians cannot but honour,—the author of the "Intellectual System."

"I wish," says Dr. Cudworth "while we talk of light, and dispute about truth, we could walk more as children of the light.

"There are many large volumes and discourses written concerning Christ; thousands of controversies discussed; infinite problems determined concerning his divinity, humanity, union of both together, and what not? So that our book-Christians that have all their religion in writings and papers, think they are now completely furnished with all kinds of knowledge concerning Christ; and when they see all their leaves lying about them, they think they have a goodly stock of knowledge and truth; as if religion were nothing but a book-craft, a mere paper skill.

"Many of the learned, if they can but wrangle and dispute about Christ, imagine themselves to be grown great proficients in the school of Christ.

"The greatest part of the world, whether learned or unlearned, think that there is no need of purging and purifying of their hearts for the right knowledge of Christ and his gospel; but though their lives be never so wicked, their hearts never so foul within, yet they may know Christ sufficiently out of their treatises and discourses, out of their mere systems and bodies of divinity,—which I deny not to be useful in a subordinate way; although our Saviour prescribeth his disciples another method to come to the right knowledge of divine truths, by doing of God's will:—'He that will do my Father's will (saith he) shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.' He is a true Christian indeed, not he that is only book-taught, but he that is God-taught; 'He that hath an unction from the Holy One, (as our Apostle calleth it) that teacheth him all things; he that hath the Spirit of Christ within him, that searcheth out the deep things of God: for as no man knoweth

the things of a man save the spirit of man which is in him; even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.'

"Ink and paper can never make us Christians; can never beget a new nature, a living principle in us; can never form Christ, or any true notion of spiritual things in our hearts. The gospel, that new law which Christ delivered to the world, it is not merely a letter without us, but a quickening spirit within us. Cold theorems and maxims, dry and jejune disputes, lean syllogistical reasonings, could never yet of themselves beget the least glimpse of true heavenly light, the least sap of saving knowledge in any heart. All this is but the groping of the poor dark spirit of man after truth, to find it out with his own endeavours, and feel it with his own cold and benumbed hands. Words and syllables, which are but dead things, cannot possibly convey the living notions of heavenly truths to us. The secret mysteries of a divine life; of a new nature; of Christ formed in our hearts, they cannot be written or spoken;—language and expression cannot reach them;—neither can they ever be truly understood, except the soul itself be kindled from within, and awakened into the life of them. A painter that would draw a rose, though he may flourish some likeness of it in figure and colour, yet he can never paint the scent and fragrancy; or, if he would draw a flame, he cannot put a constant heat into his colours; he cannot make his pencil drop a sound, as the echo in the epigram mocks at him;—*si vis similem pingere, pinge sonum.* All the skill of cunning artisans and mechanics cannot put a principle of life into a statue of their own making. Neither are we able to enclose in words and letters, the life, soul,

and essence of any spiritual truths, and, as it were, to incorporate it in them.

"Some philosophers have determined that ἀρετη is not διδακτον: virtue cannot be taught by any certain rules or precepts. Men and books may propound some directions to us, that may set us in such a way of life and practice, as in which we shall at last find it within ourselves, and be experimentally acquainted with it; but they cannot teach it us like a mechanic art or trade. No surely; there is a spirit in man; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth this understanding. But we shall not meet with this spirit any where but in the way of obedience: the knowledge of Christ, and the keeping of his commandments, must always go together, and be mutual causes of one another."

Again he says: "The first Adam, as the Scripture tells us, brought in a real defilement, which, like a noisome leprosy hath overspread all mankind; and, therefore, the second Adam must really convey such an immortal seed of grace into the hearts of true believers, as may prevail still more and more in them, till it have at last quite wrought out that poison of the serpent.

"Christ, that was nothing but divinity dwelling in a tabernacle of flesh, and God himself immediately acting a human nature, came into the world to kindle here that divine life amongst men, which is certainly dearer to God than any thing else whatsoever in the world; and to propagate this celestial fire from one heart still unto another, until the end of the world. Neither is he, nor was he, ever absent from his spark of divinity kindled amongst men, whatsoever it be, though he seem bodily to be withdrawn from us. He is the standing, constant, inexhausted fountain of

this divine light and heat, that still toucheth every soul that is enlivened by it with out-stretched ray, and freely lends his beams, and disperseth his influence to all, from the beginning of the world to the end of it. *We all receive of his fulness, grace for grace;* as the planets in the heavens light their candles at the sun's flame. For though his body be withdrawn from us, yet by the lively and virtual conduct of his Spirit, he is always kindling, cheering, quickening, warning, and enlivening our hearts. Nay, this Divine life begun and kindled in any heart, wheresoever it be, is something of God in the flesh; and, in a sober and qualified sense, Divinity incarnate.

"Holiness is something of God, wherever he is; it is an efflux from him, that always hangs upon him and lives in him: as the sun-beams, though they gild this lower world and spread their golden wings over us, yet they are not so much here where they shine, as in the sun whence they flow: holiness is the life of God, which he cannot but feed and maintain wheresoever it is."*

* See a Discourse on 1 John, chap. ii. ver. 3, 4, by R. Cudworth, D. D. preached before the House of Commons at Westminster, 1647.

The reputation of Dr. Cudworth is great, not only in this country, but among all the learned in Europe. The uncouthness of his language and the quaintness of his thoughts will not, it is hoped, disgust the delicacy of readers unaccustomed to the writings of our old divines: I think I am doing service to the cause which I am defending, whenever I can bring their arms into the field; though it must be confessed, that they have sometimes contracted rust from the effects of time. Gold and diamonds, though long buried in the earth, lose nothing of their intrinsic value by a little incrustation. It is a pitiable fastidiousness which loathes truth, religious truth especially, because it is presented to the mind in diction rather obsolete.

The true knowledge of Christ is then to be obtained by grace; that effluence divine into the hearts of men, which makes them little lower than the angels; pure in all their thoughts, benevolent in their sentiments, without guile in their words and actions, loving and amiable. Grace alone can effect this high improvement of human nature. Artifice may assume the appearance of Christian virtues: human accomplishments may imitate them; but it is grace only that gives the reality.

But the sacrament of the Lord's supper is the instituted mode of conferring grace in a peculiar abundance. To know Christ aright, it is necessary to experience his grace in the emblematical food of his divine essence. It is not necessary to discuss with mathematical nicety and metaphysical subtilty those holy mysteries, which are as far above human intellect, as the Deity who ordained them is above human nature; but it is necessary to feel their influence.

We may read or compose volumes on commemorative rites, federal rites, positive rites, we may explain away every thing that is apparently difficult, and make the Gospel bend to our own wishes or preconceptions; and, after all, know less of Christ, I mean as to saving knowledge, than even the unlearned Christian, who with firm faith and with lively gratitude, unoffended by the difficulties of a mystery, receives Christ; that is, receives the Holy Spirit, who applies to him the benefits procured by Christ, while he partakes of the elements in the Eucharistical Communion. The cavilling disputant in theology makes the Sacrament an insignificant, lifeless ceremony; while every worthy receiver, learned or unlearned, feels it conferring on him the invaluable benefits of pardon and sanctification. The anti-

superstitions, as it is well observed, are quite as ridiculous, and much more mischievous than the superstitions of the well-meaning but unlearned devotee.

"When thou comest," says the celebrated Dr. Donne, "to this seal of thy peace, the Sacrament, pray that God will give thee that light that may direct and establish thee in fundamental things; that is, the light of faith, to see that the body and blood of Christ are applied to thee in that action; but for the manner how* the body and blood of Christ is there, wait his leisure. If he have not yet manifested that to thee, grieve not at that; wonder not at that; press not for that: let us exercise our faith only here, and leave our disputations in the school."†

Precisely with such a disposition as Dr. Donne recommends, the multitude of Christians, who are yet untainted with the depreciator's doctrine, come to the Sacrament; and as they are hungry, there is every reason to believe that they are filled with good things; while, it is to be feared, "the rich," those who abound in their own sense and knowledge, "are sent empty away."‡

* Profuisse deprehendas, quomodo profuerunt, non deprehendes. SENECA.

† "If then it seem strange how a thing can be as truly real, spiritually as carnally; seek the Spirit of God, who is the knitter of this knot, and that will teach thee, that the power of the word, which appointed light to be, and it was, and the evening and the morning to be a day, and it was; and man to be, and he was; did also ordain the body and blood of Christ to be really one with the elements, without locality or mixture, and therefore, so they are." ROGERS.

‡ "As the Jews, after they had offered to God, in the temple, their peace-offerings, did eat a part in his presence, whereby they were admitted as his guests, and reconciled to him: so in the same analogy, the Eucharist is a banquet, where the faithful feed on Christ crucified; not, indeed, on his real body and blood, but on

SECTION XXI.

The Love of Christ to Man, of Man to Christ, and of Man to Man, strikingly exhibited in the Eucharist duly celebrated.

THE rigid examiners of Christ's pretensions (a favourite word of such persons, and used by Bishop Hoadly on the Sacrament,)* seldom take into consideration what the Scriptures dwell upon, the love of God, the love of Christ, and the return of love which is due from man to his Maker, Preserver, and Redeemer. They seem to make theology a scholastic science, and exclude the fervour of piety. The affections, which have great sway in the cause of virtue and goodness, as well as of vice, have scarcely any place in the meagre systems of what I may denominate a philosophical and mathematical theology; that sort of theology which amuses a few good and ingenious men in their libraries, but has little effect on a world groaning under evil both moral and natural; and requiring the guidance and consolation of a popular religion.

the symbols which he has constituted in their stead: God is the master of the feast, and there he looks on us as his children, as reconciled to him. We enter into his banquetting-house, and the banner over us is love." *Anon. Essay on the Lord's Supper.*

It is of great importance, while we are speaking of grace, and the influence of the Holy Spirit, to understand rightly the word Paraclete.

The original word, used by our Saviour himself, is supposed to have been פרקליט "Praklita," a word borrowed by the Jews from the Greeks, and signifying, in the opinion of learned men, not an advocate or a comforter only, but more properly a monitor.

MICHAELIS.

* Page 106 of his Plain Account.

Notwithstanding the cold and comfortless representations of the detractors from the dignity and benefit of sacramental communion, it is certain that the whole of the transaction is begun and completed in pious love. It is a delightful exercise of the finest affections or sensibilities of the human soul. The name Eucharist signifies the expression of gratitude, always a pleasing office, and more especially delightful, when shown to the God who is love itself, and multiplies his benefits in proportion as they are gratefully acknowledged. This holy feast after the sacrifice, the great Sacrifice once made, as a full, perfect, and sufficient oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, is a luxurious banquet for the soul, in which it is gratified with love, joy, and peace.*

It was commanded in the law of Moses, "thou shalt rejoice in thy feasts before the Lord;"† and

* Mihi ante omnia, et supra omnia summa dulcedo.

ROM. MISSAL.

Jansenius autem eam Christi gratiam, quæ hominem jam boni cognitione illustratum, et variis modis pulsatum, allectum et sollicitatum, ut bonum amplectatur, ad illud tandem reapse prosequendum efficacitèr et certò determinat, non aliud esse vult, quam cælestem quandam atque ineffabilem suavitatem, seu spiritualem delectationem, quâ voluntas prævenitur et flectitur ad volendum faciendumque quicquid Deus eam velle et facere constituerit. Nec enim ullum esse genus actionis aut voluntatis bonæ, ullumve effectum gratiæ efficacis, qui non isti cælesti delectationi, tanquam veræ gratiæ Christi, verœque causæ tribuendum sit. Illam esse, per quam bonum quod prædicatur nobis, incipimus concupiscere: per quam bonum jam cogitatum piâ voluntate credimus atque suscipimus. Sine cœlitus infusâ ejusmodi delectatione, nec orationem ullam Deo gratam fundi posse, nec Deum pure et castè diligi, nec cupiditatum nostrarum tentationibus resisti, nec denique ullum bonum opus fieri. Ut prolixè Doctor ille ex Augustino probare contendit.

JANSENIUS De gratia Christi Salvatoris, lib. 4. cap. 1. et seq.

† Deut. xvi. 11.

surely if the Jews had cause to rejoice at their paschal feast, in memory of their deliverance from the house of bondage, their state of slavery in Egypt, Christians must feel delight in commemorating the mercy of God in sending the Son of his Love, out of his bosom, to redeem them from the chains of sin and death. St. Luke, in the Acts, gives us a pleasing account of the behaviour of the first Christians in celebrating the Lord's supper:—"And they, continuing with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread in the house,* (in the place of their religious assemblies,) did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people."† Consistently with the idea of joy as the predominant sentiment at the Eucharist, we are taught in our Communion office to break out in the following words with rapture: "With angels and archangels, and with all the company of Heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious name, evermore praising thee, and saying, holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord most high." And again: "We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee, we give thanks to thee for thy great glory, O Lord God, Heavenly King, God, the Father Almighty."

These words are expressions of the warmest feelings of love, gratitude, and adoration. They who repeat them without such feelings are so far guilty of hypocrisy; to avoid which it is necessary to raise the mind to a high degree of ardour or fervency; a purpose rendered difficult, if not impossible to be accomplished by the refrigerating doctrines of those who undervalue the holy rite. We must endeavour

* So it should be translated. † Acts, ii. 46.

to feel, with due force, the love of Christ towards us; and love will produce love. We are commemorating the greatest instance of love that possibly could exist:—"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend:"—but we, as sinners, were enemies,—"and,* God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."† Such words should not be carelessly repeated, but laid to heart, after serious consideration of their full force and significancy. How great would have been our wretchedness if he had not shown us this love? but as he has shown it, we have reason to believe that he will continue it; and with himself freely give us all things—an exalted state of bliss and perfection, in a future and glorified existence.

Thus the worthy communicant experiences in the Eucharist, the truth of St. John's declaration:—"God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."‡ He has a prelibation§

* Rom. v. 8.

† The Eucharist is an expression of gratitude. "Instead of slaying of beasts and burning incense, whereby they called on the name of the Lord in the Old Testament, the Fathers believed our Saviour ordained this sacrifice of bread and wine as a rite whereby to give thanks and make supplication to his Father in his name."

JOSEPH MEDE.

It was therefore called Ευχαριστια, or the Sacrament of Thanksgiving or Gratitude.

‡ 1 John, iv. 16.

§ "I speak here of that soft, calm satisfaction which every good man feels more or less in the conscientious discharge of his duty, and of this duty in particular above all others. And I may appeal to the experience of all faithful Christians, whether in the performance of it they do not find a pleasure infinitely superior to all earthly enjoyments, and a peace within their own breasts, which the world cannot give. For I do not mean, by what I have said above, those transports of joy, even to ecstasy, which are only constitutional, and which some enthusiastical persons have felt (or

of the happiness of heaven; for in what can that happiness consist, if not in a holy joy, in a refined love, gratified with the society and favour of the supreme excellence, which the soul delights in, as congenial to its original and unpolluted nature.

Man is so constituted, that unless he is impelled by some affection, he becomes inactive and listless, though his understanding at the same time be convinced of the propriety of strenuous exertion. The spur of inclination is necessary to religious, as well as to moral, social, civil, or political activity. It is pride, avarice, or voluptuousness, which fill our streets, our emporiums, our theatres, with all the bustle of business and alacrity of motion. A more refined affection than these, devotional love, must fill our churches, and crowd our tables of sacramental communion: and it is right to excite an ardour of this kind, to counteract the ardours which the world and its vanities never fail to kindle.

Accordingly our Saviour, intimately acquainted

at least have given out that they have felt) in the exercise of the grossest superstition, and which many of the same complexion have experienced likewise in the best religion, who yet have been persons of none of the best morals, but rather wholly devoid of the spiritual life. It is sometimes possible, indeed, that God Almighty may, for the encouragement of young beginners in religion, give them extraordinary tastes of the pleasures that are to be had in it, as he has sometimes done to persons exposed to very great trials and dangers for the sake of their virtue, which was in some measure the case of David, and especially that of St. Paul, who was caught up into the third Heaven, 2 Cor. xii. 4. But as we have at present no certain mark in these sensible joys themselves to distinguish what really comes from the Spirit of God, from what may be the natural effect only of a sanguine and lively constitution, we may say, in general, that the best and least equivocal evidence we can have of a sincere piety, is to be formed from the vigorous and uninterrupted efforts we make to obey the will of God in all things, and not from transports and ecstasies, which come upon us, we know not why or wherefore." *Essay on the Lord's Supper.*

with human nature, has comprehended almost the whole of his religion in the affection of love or charity. He taught nothing of scholastic refinement or academical theology: love is the beginning, the middle, and the end of his philanthropic code. To the lawyer who asked him which was the great commandment in the law, he answered, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; this is the first and great commandment; and the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

The Eucharist indispensably requires, and greatly increases this love in us, both to God and man; for it unites the hearts of all who communicate in the strictest bond of amity. Our Lord, in an affectionate discourse, when near his death, and at the very time of instituting the Sacrament, says, "This is my commandment, that ye love one another; as I have loved you: a new commandment I give you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." The communion of the body and blood of Christ unites the communicants or receivers into one body. The Apostle expressly says,—"For we, being many, are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread." He who comes to the table with a heart full of envy, hatred, and malice, may indeed eat the bread and drink the wine with others, but he does not, and cannot, communicate either with God or man.

But the blessed Sacrament, worthily received, reconciles God to man, and man to man. Considered in its just light, it is a feast of love, and contributes to the happiness of this life,* while it tends to secure it in a better. The disposition is softened by

* The Heathens made their religious sacrifices subservient to the purposes of family love and unity:

it; and man comes from the communion table into society with a heart filled with those kind and friendly

Proxima cognati dixêre charistia chari,
Et venit ad socias turba propinqua dapes.
Innocui veniant; procul hinc, procul impius esto.
——————— Concordia fertur
Illo precipuè mitis adesse die.
Et libate dapes: ut grati pignus honoris,
Nutriat incinctos missa patella lares.
Jamque ubi suadebit placidos nox humida somnos,
Parca precaturæ sumite vina manus:
Et bene nos, Patriam, bene te, Pater optime, Cæsar,
Dicitè suffuso, sint rata verba, mero. OVID.

Finito Convivio, Græci hauriebant poculum
ΔΙΟΣ ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΑΓΑΘΟΥ ΔΑΙΜΟΝΟΣ.
ATHENÆUS.

" Inter omnia convivia fœderalia principem merito locum, augustissimum religiosissimumque illud epulum Dominicum obtinet, in quo quidem Christiani partim ejusdem panis vinique externâ corporeâque degustatione, partim unius ejusdemque corporis sanguinisque Christi spirituali, quæ per fidem fit, communione, sacrosanctum illud suum inviolabileque fœdus, quo et cum Deo, et inter se sunt conjuncti, ipsius Christo pretiosissimo sanguine percussum, testari sanctè religiosèque solent. Et quænam sanctior, religiosior, augustior fœderis, amicitiæ, charitatisque nostræ, quâ cum Deo et nobiscum invicèm conjuncti sumus, attestatio, sanctiove, dici aut excogitari potest?

" Unde apparet quàm diro inexpiabilique perfidiæ crimine sese obstringant omnes ii, qui datam hanc publice, in sacrosancto illo convivio, Deo Hominibusque Fidem, impiè et nefariè frangunt; et cum ipsum Deum sceleratâ flagitiosaque vivendi consuetudine, tum homines quosvis, quâvis datâ et oblatâ occasione, injuriis violandi, odia, contentiones, inimicitias excitandi, ac pacem concordiamque, cum publicam tum privatam, perturbandi, nullum finem faciunt.

" Quod si Christiani, eâ, quâ par est, reverentiâ assiduè sacrosanctum illud epulum animis suis revolverent, non toties tantisque odiis aut inimicitiis flagrarent; et fœdera, pacem, amicitiam, fidem, concordiamque mutuam, etiamsi nulla alia juramenta, sanctionesque intercederent, sanctissime religiosissimè que observarent que colerent." STUCKII. Antiq. Conv.

This Author is of opinion with me, that if all, who call them-

sentiments which, more than any thing else sweeten the intercourse of human life. He comes from the communion table with that purity, which tends immediately to promote and preserve innocence.

SECTION XXII.

Of the Opinion that the POSITIVE *Duties of Christianity may be neglected, without incurring Blame, by those who observe the* MORAL *Duties.*

THE social duties of man to man appear to be considered by many as the sum and substance of Christianity. Such duties as the reception of the Eucharist are called positive, and mentioned with contempt by them in comparison with moral duties. "I may surely be excused from forms and ceremonies," says the self-complacent moral philosopher, "while I take care to possess and practise the essentials of virtue; while I pay my debts, do no harm to anybody, and add my mite, when I think proper, to the contributions raised in support of public and approved charities: I am a Christian; for I was baptized in my infancy, and my parents were such before me; but, with respect to mysterious doctrines or ordinances,

selves Christians, were, with due consideration, to take this Holy Sacrament; and, with proper affections (such as become Christians above all others,) to join together in this sacred and brotherly banquet; the Eucharist would be the means of establishing and securing universal peace, public, as well as private, throughout all Christendom.

It is wonderful with what rancour and animosity, persons, calling themselves Christians, will express their hatred against the persons of individuals; who, in the vicissitudes of human affairs, become public enemies; and how little they seek peace (if they seek it at all) in the spirit of peace. The sanctimonious pretenders to religion, when they think war advantageous to their political party, are the last to forgive.

I shall not trouble myself with what I do not understand, but be contented with acting a just, beneficent, and honourable part in the society in which I was placed by fortune. The sacrament of the Lord's supper I number among positive and formal duties, if it is to be numbered among duties at all, and consider it as inferior in value to the virtues which I daily practise in the common intercourse of life. I leave it therefore to zealots, to enthusiasts, and to formalists; and maintain, that I may be, and am, a good Christian without it."

On this soliloquy, which has all the plausibility of worldly wisdom, I have only to observe, that whoever utters it may be a scholar of Socrates or Epictetus, but not of Jesus Christ. For, whatever moral virtues we may possess, he expressly declares, "Except we eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, we have no life in us;" that is, unless we partake the benefits of the grand Sacrifice on the cross, by partaking of the feast upon it, instituted by Christ himself, we have no spiritual life, no assistance of the Holy Ghost, no exemption from death eternal. What will our soliloquist's morality do to supply that, without which, our Saviour says, we can have no spiritual life? Is the soliloquist sure that his moral virtues are sound and sincere? The heart is deceitful and may flatter him, as it has many, with a self-approbation, not founded on merit, but on pride.

I would say to him, "Add divinity to pure morality and you will animate a beautiful body with the warmth and vigour of life; divest morality of divinity, separate it from all connection with the will of God, and you leave it a specious form, indeed, but comparatively lifeless and insubstantial. Divinity, like the sun in the world of nature, cherishes

a vital principle of the soul, promotes its growth, and raises it to full maturity."

The gospel teaches morality; all the discourses of those who preach the gospel inculcate morality; every doctrine of our religion is connected with morality; but then it is a morality invigorated, sublimed, and refined by divinity, by a pious deference to the God who made us, and can destroy us for ever.

Morality, independent of divinity, considers man as related only to man; but man is also related to God, as a stream to its fountain; and his most important duties originate from that relation.

Morality, independent of divinity, seems to view man as an inhabitant of this world only; but the sacraments, as Dr. Waterland observes, "raise the mind higher, even to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, to angels and archangels, and the whole host of heaven, tending to produce dispositions proper for living in conjunction, or union, with that blessed society. So that, with respect at least to the life to come, the sacraments have the advantage over other duties called moral, forming the mind to higher views, and being more perfective of man's nature. In secular, or worldly duties, secularity or worldly-mindedness is apt to creep in too much, and it is not very easy always, in performing them, to keep the heart and mind intent upon God, or to perform them upon a purely religious principle. But in the devout observance of the Sacraments, the mind is lifted up from earthly things, and is more abstracted from the world; on which account, these duties are preferable, as forming in us dispositions proper for a heavenly state."

The lukewarm and disputatious still argue against the value and importance of positive duties; that is, of duties of divine appointment; duties instituted

by revelation only, and such as would not have been suggested to the human mind by reason undirected or unassisted.

Such are Baptism and the Eucharist. These are positive rites, and peculiar to Christianity. But human nature requires positive rites, both as memorials, and as excitements of devotion. Our Saviour, knowing human nature by his divine intuition, and likewise by his assumption of it, complied with its feelings, expectations, and prepossessions. But in the place of the numerous ceremonies of heathenism, burthensome in themselves, and apt to turn the attention from the business of devotion, rather than promote it, Christ established but two, both of them strongly significant; Baptism, significant of cleansing from pollution by water; and the Eucharist, of expiation by a sacrificed victim. The minds of men, in every part of the world, were prepared for the reception of such rites by previous notions, habits, and forms of sacrificial service.

When thus instituted by Divine authority, though not suggested by reason, who, without presumption can say, that they are not of universal obligation; or, that they are inferior in value and importance to moral duties?*

The Christian who depreciates the sacraments

* L'Eucharist nourrit et fortifie toutes les vertus Chretiennes; elle donne une idée vive et sensible de la peine que merite le peche: ainsi la douleur de l'avoir commis doit etre profonde.

L'Eucharist est le plus grand bien qu'on puisse recevoir sur la terre.

Enfin, il n'y a point de faveur si precieuse, que ce Sacrement ne nous confere. Toutes les graces qu'on peut souhaiter sont les fruits de la mort de Jesus Christ. En recevant le Sacrement, on participe a la mort de Jesus Christ; on est donc un droit de pretendre a la possession de toutes les graces, et de tous les tresors de glorie, qui sont inseparable de cette mort, et de ce Sacrement.

BASNAGE.

because they are positive, or instituted rites, depreciates obedience to the Sovereign Ruler of the universe. Let him beware lest, instead of serving the cause of morality, which he professes to honour, he should weaken the ties of all moral obligation; for he who treats obedience to an express command of God, as a duty which may be slighted in any instance, will, I should think, be very apt to disregard his duty to man, when the neglect is consistent with worldly interest, and with temporal impunity.

Positive duties have a tendency to bind all other duties upon us more closely; because they recognise a living supreme Governor, while the moral duties, according to some among the modern philosophers, originate from the dictates of reason and nature, (interpreted by themselves) without the immediate interference of the Deity. Morality becomes a flexible rule to many, when it is left unfixed by a divine sanction.

Both positive and moral duties must be held in high veneration by every sincere and consistent Christian. Both must be observed with a conscientious punctuality. The observation of the moral will not excuse, in a professed Christian, the neglect of the positive.

To every Christian the sacraments must appear positively commanded; and will disobedience to a divine command be compensated by prudential and virtuous manners in the common conduct or intercourse of life? on the contrary, will not this disobedience to positive commands vitiate a course of behaviour, in other respects, as far as men can see, pure and good? We must not form our conduct solely with a view to the world's approbation, but the approbation of the Deity; and the Deity, it is probable, must be particularly offended with disobedience to a

direct order, like that which enjoins the Sacrament. "This do in remembrance of me!" To be capable of disobeying God, when the command is clear, argues a mind very little inclined to morality, I should think, in the ordinary transactions of human life.

But it is unjust to affirm that the sacrament of the Lord's supper is merely a positive duty unconnected with morality. It requires great virtues, faith, hope, charity, and humility, for its worthy reception. It requires a frame of mind favourable to every virtue which improves and embellishes society. It cannot be received without an abhorrence of every injurious quality, without a disposition to every thing virtuous and laudable. The worthy reception of it is not merely a means of virtue, but a virtue in itself of the highest order. Wranglers may dispute on the comparative value of positive and moral duties; but the man who is a worthy communicant will act in such a manner as to leave his goodness and virtue in social life, as the result of his communion, a matter which admits of no controversy.

For the sake, however, of those who puzzle themselves with the intricacies of disputation concerning positive and moral duties, instead of acting in obedience to a divine command, from the sentiments of a good and simple heart, I will add a passage from Dr. Waterland; from which it will appear that the obligation to positive duties is as strong as to moral.

"If," says he, "God's command in moral duties constitute duty and virtue, then, of consequence, God's command in matters of a positive nature constitutes duty and virtue also; and, therefore, our obedience in either case, resolves into the same principle, and has the same common ground of obligation. God's reasons for commanding may be different; but our reasons for obeying are the same. Reasons

of the law are one thing; and reasons of the obligation are another. A law should not want its reasons; but yet it is the law and not those reasons, that creates the obligation; for the law would oblige, though we knew nothing of the reasons on which it is founded. Positive duties, therefore, and moral, are alike obligatory, as enjoined by the same authority and enforced by the same sanctions. Both proceed from the same infinite goodness, and both lead to the same infinite happiness; which is sufficient to infer equal obligation, when other circumstances are equal. Moral duties arise from the will or command of God founded on the known and standing reason of things; positive duties from the will or command of God, founded on occasional reasons, known perhaps to God alone. In moral laws we see the reasons first, and by these we come to the knowledge of the law; which method of investigation has probably occasioned the mistake of supposing the reasons obligatory antecedently to the law, though they are proofs only that there is and must be a law suitable; in positive laws we know the laws first, and afterwards the reasons, (so far as we at all know them) and so nobody suspects an obligation prior to the laws."

Therefore, (to proceed with the same excellent man's sentiments, if not exactly in his words,) let religion and morality go hand in hand. Let not faith be opposed to morality, nor morality to faith. Let not moral duties be extolled to the neglect of positive, nor positive to the neglect of moral. Let God be loved in the first place; and men for God's sake, in the second, as God has ordained. Let the Christian sacraments be held in esteem as divine ordinances, and as the springs of the spiritual life; both productive of moral virtues and perfective of them. Lastly, let all extremes be avoided, and the true

medium fixed between enthusiasm and superstition on one hand, and irreligion or profaneness on the other; so that all may terminate in glory to God and good to man.

SECTION XXIII.

The Observation of Ritual Ordinances, conducive, in a high Degree, to the salutary Purposes of Religion.

THE majority of mankind are so constituted as to render it difficult to teach them spiritual things without sensible images. It is not, indeed, desirable, if it were possible, that any nation should consist entirely of philosophers: the plough, the loom, the mill, the hammer, the axe, the waggon, and the ship, would stand still, if all men were capable of, and addicted to refined contemplation. But those who are employed in the mechanical works of agriculture and merchandise, are no less interested in religious doctrines, as far as they are effective of salvation, than the professors of theology. To preserve the sense of religion among the mass of mankind, it is necessary, that there should be public buildings appropriated to divine service, and rites and ceremonies established in them; with objects palpable to their senses, actions strikingly expressive, even decorous vestments, differing from those in common use, and every thing else that can fix the attention to the main business, to the offices of devotion, and to the lessons of religious instruction. Indeed, whatever intellectual pride may suggest, all men, however improved, are susceptible of great and desirable effects from the external ceremonies of religion. It has pleased Providence to make the avenues to the soul lead through the organs of sensation.

Those who dissent from the established church, however far they have thought proper to recede from the vanity of Roman Catholic ceremony, yet retain some solemnities in their external modes of worship, calculated to inspire a religious reverence. Their ministers usually wear black garments; they have edifices set apart for worship, and several of them administer the sacrament of the Lord's supper with great solemnity. The Quakers, who recede the farthest from the church, meet in places appropriated to worship, retain a very remarkable distinction of dress at all times, and add something to it, I believe, when an instructress delivers admonitions to the congregation. But if this were not the case, their exception would not contravene the decisions of a great majority of mankind in favour of ceremonies, in all ages, and in every climate:—It is the voice of nature that approves them; and revelation has not prohibited but encouraged them, especially by the examples recorded in the Old Testament. I hope, therefore, that no man will think himself a promoter of religion and a benefactor of society, by divesting the rites of the Christian religion which still remain among the reformed, of their power to excite awe, to banish worldly ideas, and to prepare the mind for spiritual improvement. Whoever employs his reasoning faculties and his learning to such a purpose, displays his want of philosophy, his want of knowledge of human nature, no less than the coldness of his devotional sentiments.

A caviller of antiquity maintained, that a grove consecrated to religious worship, and inspiring by its gloomy grandeur a religious awe, was nothing more than a plantation of timber trees.* Every man of common sense knows as well as he, that it was

* Lucum Ligna. Hor.

but a wood; but every man of common sense, knew also that, by an association of ideas, a grove, as well as a piece of architecture, may constitute in effect a temple, and contribute to inspire the mind with sentiments favourable to devotion.

There never can be many, among the myriads that form the mass of human beings, who will not be affected by associating religious ideas with material forms properly adapted to the purpose; but the attempt to prevent such an affection is always mischievous as far as it is successful. It robs the mind of a great and pure pleasure, and has a tendency to produce infidelity or atheism. It seems paradoxical, but, I believe, experience will prove, that a man may reason himself by sophistical cavilling, not only out of all his comforts, all his virtues, all his religion, but out of common sense.

Heavenly things are so far above all human languages, that it is necessary to attempt a supply of the defect by allusive imagery, by hieroglyphical figures, by ritual performances; and, to speak more particularly to our present purpose, by the elements of bread, of wine, and water, in the two Sacraments. Nor can I think the man entitled to the renown of peculiar sagacity, who, with much self-applause, sits down to inform the world that bread used in the rite is but grain; that wine is but the juice of the grape; and that water, only particles of matter so formed as to yield and change their places on the slightest motion.

These signs are the language of our religion, who does not express herself by sounds only, differing in their meaning in different nations of the earth, but by material substances, which, rightly used, are significant to all men, and form an universal language. Let us revere the signs for the sake of the things

signified, which are so transcendent in their nature, as to exceed all power of words formed by human articulation. It may not be improper to advert in this place to the well-known circumstance, that signs were the favourite modes of expressing ideas or thoughts in the Oriental countries whence our religion derived its origin. Information by actions and images was not in those regions confined to religious topics, but was a familiar mode of common conversation, and almost general in matters political, philosophical, and theological. Neither has the mode of speaking by signs and actions ceased in this age. Did not the inhabitants of the islands in the Pacific ocean, unacquainted with our language, hold out branches, when they intended to signify their peaceful intentions to their European visitors, approaching in tremendous floating castles to their unprotected shore? The branches spoke and were understood, while their language (if it could have been heard at the distance described) would have wanted an interpreter, who could not have been procured; and would have been comparatively slow and feeble in expressing the general wish for peace and amity.

Symbols, emblems, tropes, allegories, fables, expressive actions; all these are used, and must of necessity be used, on some occasions to supply the defect of language. Their use in the Sacrament is in every respect highly proper. They have spoken with effect to millions of the human race, who understood them well, who received solace from them, in the pilgrimage of life, and who, in consequence of them, laid themselves down at the close of life, to sleep in peace, and with the hope of a blessed immortality.

SECTION XXIV.

Of the Attempts of learned Divines of the Church of England to disprove the NECESSITY *of* PREPARATION *for the Sacrament; or, to render it slight and superficial.*

THE detractors from the dignity of the Eucharist proceed, consistently with their general design, to deny the necessity, and to doubt even the expediency of preparation. According to their notions of a worthy reception, it consists in a decent deportment during the time of the solemnity. Bishop Hoadly says, "Examination is not a duty necessary previous to the Lord's supper; and the whole affair (such are his words) of eating and drinking unworthily, is confined to the frame of our minds and our behaviour at the very time of our performance of this religious duty."

Bishop Pearce denies that St. Paul's exhortation, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup," seems to relate to any examination of what sins they had been formerly guilty of. "If," continues he, "to eat and drink unworthily be to do it intemperately and without reverence, the phrase 'Let a man examine himself,' must signify to do it reverently." He asserts that the Greek word* does not signify let him examine, but let him distinguish himself from a guest at a common meal: and this difference consists in receiving the Sacrament with reverence; with a consideration of the end of the institution, namely, a remembrance of Christ's death, and love and affec-

* Δοκιμαζετω Εαυτον.

tion for our brethren. I must here remark, that Bishop Taylor, a much greater man, says, "That the Greek word here translated *examine*, signifies the strictest sort of trial or examination, such as that by which gold is tried by the fire."

Dr. Balguy says: "The necessity of the self-examination may first, perhaps, have been suggested by a mistaken interpretation of a passage in one of St. Paul's Epistles; and ought not to be dissembled, that there is no passage in Scripture, which expressly requires it of us as a condition of receiving the Sacrament." Dr. Balguy however allows the propriety of it; but why should men exert their ingenuity in disproving the necessity of a conduct which they allow to be proper. The necessity appears from St. Paul's words in our translation, which scholars of great ability think the right one.

Dr. Bell does not desert the cause which he had undertaken in his "Practical Inquiry," when he comes to instruct the unlearned Christian concerning preparation. He teaches, that habitual good intentions, joined to the serious employment of our thoughts at the time, in the business we are about, will, in every instance, render our attendance upon the celebration of the Lord's supper, as well as the performance of every other act of religious worship, an acceptable service without setting apart any precise period of time to prepare ourselves for it. As to any precise time for preparation, I know of nobody who ever said, that the limitation to a particular length of time was necessary. But duties for which no particular time is set apart, are apt to be performed at no time: and where is the necessity or propriety of contending against a precise time for preparation; if any well-disposed Christian think the appointment of a precise time conducive to this

pious purpose? All these attempts to prevent either the preparation in general, or the fixing of a precise time for it in particular, contribute to make men consider the Sacrament as an insignificant rite, which may be performed without advantage, or neglected without any evil consequence.

A Bishop of Winchester, with his Archdeacon, and Prebendary; and a Bishop of Rochester, with a Prebendary of Westminster, contending against the necessity of preparation for the Sacrament, are sufficient to confound, if not to convince, the unlearned reader.* What the late worthy Bishop of St. Asaph, Dr. Bagot, says to the Prebendary of Westminster, Dr. Bell, in an excellent remonstrance upon the subject, might have been addressed to them all with propriety.†

"Your estimation in the world," says he, "will of course give a certain degree of credit to every thing you publish. The generality of readers will be little disposed to suspect either your intentions, or your prudence. It becomes, on this account, the more necessary, that whatever proceeds from your pen should be scrupulously examined. The established worship of this country has a claim to some deference and respect from her own sons at least; from those especially who are engaged in her service by the solemn professions, who live of the sacrifice, and eat of the milk of the flock.

"Our blessed Lord hath enjoined two solemn and significant rites for perpetual observance in the

* Benjamin Hoadly, Bishop of Winchester; Thomas Balguy, D. D. Archdeacon and Prebendary of Winchester; Zachary Pearce, Bishop of Rochester; and William Bell, D. D. Prebendary of St. Peter's, Westminster.

† See a Letter to Dr. Bell on the subject of his late publication on the Authority, Nature, and Design of the Lord's Supper, by Lewis Bagot, D. D.

church. To understand these aright, and conscientiously to practise them in perfect agreement with the intention of their Great Author, must be an object of the utmost consequence to every individual Christian, whatever his rank or attainments may be.

"Neither your principles nor arguments are new; they have been uniformly adopted by all Socinian writers on the subject. It is true likewise, that these principles, by whomsoever adopted, are themselves utterly inconsistent with the public doctrines and service of the established church.

"What can the poor man think, or how can he act, with his Common-prayer book in one hand, for which he hath all his life entertained a just veneration; and in the other, Dr. Bell's Practical Inquiry, which assures him that his Prayer-book hath hitherto deceived him, and led him to pervert the most solemn institution of his Saviour?*

"Surely it is a very serious matter to trifle thus with the consciences of men; and can only tend to weaken that influence of religious principle, which still operates among us; though, God knows, with less power, and to less extent than might be wished.

"Your 'Practical Inquiry' calls for notice; and the unlearned believers, on whom it is imposed, ought to be warned of the danger of it. It is yet in your power, and I am convinced it is your duty, to suppress it yourself. The religious peace and comfort of thousands may be affected by it."

Thus far Bishop Bagot, with a zeal and moderation which do him honour. The "Practical Inquiry" is not yet suppressed. The third edition of it, just purchased, lies before me; and, if its doctrines were so dangerous as Bishop Bagot represents them to have been many years ago, how much more so at

* See Bell's "Practical Inquiry," Question 37.

the present day, when the example of apostasy on the neighbouring continent has caused infidelity to triumph in every part of Europe.

The imitators of Bishop Hoadly, on the Sacrament, seem to me particularly injudicious, and injurious to the cause of virtue and religion, when, like him, they discourage preparation. Considered in the lowest sense, preparation for the Sacrament furnishes a fine opportunity for improvement in morality.* The mind at stated times, retires within itself; reviews its habits and passions, endeavours to correct whatever is found wrong, and forms resolutions for future undeviating rectitude: a most philosophical as well as religious exercise; such as would be approved in the school of Epictetus as well as of Christ; and such as no man, who has just conceptions of the present state of human nature would wish to discountenance.

Why should divines, of all men, take pains to teach that preparation is not necessary? While men think it necessary, they will certainly not neglect it entirely; but, once prove to them that it is a superfluous work, and they will lay aside the practice, notwithstanding they may acknowledge it useful, as a moral exercise. Take away the idea of awe and veneration attached to the Eucharist, and men, in general, will not trouble themselves to withdraw from worldly cares, and meditate in silence and solitude on the state of their minds, and the course of their moral and religious conduct: much

* Hoc nos pessimos facit, quod nemo vitam suam respicit.
SENECA, Epist. 38.

The Pythagorean philosophers called themselves to account every night for the actions of the day.

Μὴ δ'ὑπνον μαλακοισιν επ' ὀμμασι προσδεξαθαι
Πριν των ἡμερινῶν ερἑων τρις εκαστον επελθειν.
Πῆ παραβην ; τι δ'ερεξα ; τι μοι δεον ουκ ετελεσθη.

less will they truly repent, when theologians of great rank in the church, and great reputation for abilities, intimate, in plain terms, that the preparation usually recommended, has crept into use merely by the misrepresentation of those who knew not the real nature of the Sacrament, or, who gratified some selfish purpose of their own, by deluding the weak and the uninformed.

I assert not that any limited time is prescribed for preparation by scriptural authority. I do not maintain the necessity of any peculiar form or system of preparation. But, to the propriety of preparation in general, the sense of all Christendom has given its sanction; and they are mischievously employed who teach men to slight it; the consequence of which will be an entire neglect of it, and of the Sacrament that should follow it. If there were no Sacrament, or no benefits annexed to the Sacrament, yet a moral exercise, like that of pious persons preparing for a religious act of great solemnity, would be in the highest degree beneficial. I can therefore see no good reason for any attempt to recommend the discontinuance of a practice, not only perfectly innocent, but very salutary.

If mere remembrance of a deceased benefactor, and attention at the celebration of the rite, constitute a worthy receiver; then a bad man who commands his thoughts for half an hour at the communion table, may be a better, or worthier, communicant, than a very good man, who, from the involuntary wandering of his mind, may be off his guard for a moment, though he comes prepared with faith, repentance, and charity. If unseemly behaviour at the time of celebration be all that is meant by unworthy receiving (as the depreciators sometimes contend) then it is scarcely possible in our churches to receive unworthily; for a man who should behave

indecently would either be turned out by the beadle, or rejected by the minister.

Doctrines and opinions so absurd would hardly require refutation, if they were not obtruded on the multitude by artful means, and recommended by an imposing authority.*

* On the subject of Examination previously to the reception of the Sacrament, the following passage from an old and sensible divine is worthy observation.

"The Apostle's word 'Examine' is understood by the learned in three different senses, 1st. Some understand it as a metaphorical expression taken from the art of the goldsmith, trying the purity of his gold; δοκιμαξειν being a proper word to them in the exercise of their art; as in 1 Pet. i. 7. Ινα το ΔΟΚΙΜΙΟΝ υμων της πιστεως πολυ τιμιωτερον χρυσιου.

"2ndly. Others because bread and wine, taken in the Sacrament, are both food and physic, insist on the similitude of a physician, giving preparatives to his patient before the exhibition of the efficient medicine.

"3dly. The greater part consider the word *examine* as a verbum forense et juridicum; as the magistrate examines or questions an offender.

"The latter appears to be most consonant to the Apostle's sense.

"The man who examines himself must personate three several parts; the offender, the accuser, the judge. Conscience must be the accuser, and reason the judge, who, secundum allegata et probata, will acquit or condemn.

"The interrogations upon which every man is to examine himself are these:

"1. Dost thou repair to the Sacrament with a competent measure of knowledge?

"2. Dost thou come with unfeigned repentance?

"3. Dost thou come with a lively faith?

"4. Dost thou come with love undissembled, freely from thy heart to forgive all injuries committed against thee? Some, when they are to partake of the Sacrament, say to their wickedness or malice, as Abraham said to his two servants, Gen. xxii. 5. 'Abide you here, and I will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.'

"We must, when we communicate, not only suspend the act of wickedness and malice, but depose the habit." T. Fuller.

SECTION XXV.

The Necessity and Propriety of Preparation for the Sacrament; with a few Suggestions on the Means. "ΑΓΙΑ ΑΓΙΟΙΣ."

THE necessity of preparation for the Sacrament is evident from the nature of the case,* even if Scripture did not point it out, which is far from being true, in the opinion of the best, wisest, and most learned divines that have adorned this country. "He that leads a good life," says Dr. Stanhope, "is never unprepared to receive the Sacrament." This is assented to; if by a good life is meant a Christian life; a life of obedience to the precepts, and of faith in the doctrines of Christianity. But are not the best of Christians subject to lapses, from infirmity? Is not the weakness of human nature such as to require continual efforts to preserve it from degeneracy? Has not the experience of mankind evinced, that those who cease to be progressive in ascending the hill of virtue, soon become retrograde?

The benefits sought in the Eucharist are grace, or the favour of God, and pardon. These benefits, there is every reason to think, will not be bestowed on the impenitent; and it cannot be said of any man that he needs no repentance. The general habits of his life may be virtuous, yet, if he considers attentively his sins of omission, as well as commission, he will find that he has much to regret in the course of

* Lavabo, ut rem divinam faciam. PLAUTUS.
" Φθεγξομαι οἷς θεμις εστι, θυρας δ' επιθεσθε βεβηλοις." ORPHEUS.
" Εκας, Εκας εστε βεβηλοι." CALLIM.
——————" Procul, O procul este, profani
Conclamat vates." VIRG.
" Odi profanum vulgus et arceo." HOR.

a conduct which, comparatively speaking, may be called good and exemplary.

But what shall we say of the multitude of all ranks constantly engaged in pleasure pursuits, or in anxious, heart-corroding quest of gain and advancement in life? Are they the persons, however reputable they may be, who leading a good life, never can come unprepared to receive the Sacrament? Supposing them to preserve their integrity amidst conflicting passions and interests, and in the haunts of pleasure, where the sinews of virtue are always in danger of being relaxed, yet experience will justify the assertion, that they seldom have time or inclination to attend seriously to the duties and doctrines of the Christian religion. Are men, however good their credit in the world, to come with minds heated with worldly contests, with envy, with rivalry, with voluptuous affections, to the altar? Surely before such persons venture to receive the Sacrament, preparation is absolutely necessary. The reason of the thing determines, that preparation is necessary for the majority of mankind, even if Scripture had been silent on the subject; and the most respectable divines had left the point undecided.

Of the propriety of preparing for the reception of the Sacrament, none but men of perverse minds will entertain a doubt; though divines of great character have imprudently denied its necessity.

The first time of receiving requires peculiar attention to the duty of preparation.* Care must be

* The Jews were remarkably strict in their purification, before they presumed to eat and drink, in the presence of the Holy One of Israel; and we have a Jewish prayer for spiritual purification. Salvatorem nostrum suscepturi totis viribus debemus nos, cum ipsius adjutorio, præparare; et omnes animæ nostræ latebras diligenter suspicere, ne forte sit in nobis aliquod peccatum abscondi-

taken to understand the nature of the rite, to have a due sense of the benefits annexed to it, and a full conviction of its importance. And can a person who has never read or thought of the Sacrament, till the moment when it is to be administered, be supposed to possess this knowledge, and to have this sense? Is he not likely, if he come unprepared, to err either on the side of carelessness or of superstition? His life and conversation may be good, and so far all is well; but he will require knowledge or information on the meaning and end of the Communion. The most adventurous among those who degrade the Sacrament, will not assert that instruction is improper, previous to the first reception of the Sacrament. Preparation of the understanding is now more than ever requisite; that the communicant may be prevented from supposing that he is commemorating an historical event only, by a positive and insignificant rite, unattended with any appropriate advantage.

But after the understanding is prepared by a competent knowledge of the nature and end of the Sacrament; preparation of the heart will be proper, not only at the first time, but at all times of communion. A devout frame, or disposition of mind must be formed; a disposition suitable to all solemn occasions, and peculiarly suitable to an act of worship, extraordinary in its nature, and intended to produce effects still more extraordinary.

Prayer and reflection are evidently the proper modes of raising the devotional sentiments to a due degree of height and ardour. "Happy is that soul,"

tum, quod et conscientiam nostram confundat et oculos divinæ majestatis offendat. AMBROS. de Sacramentis.

In Sacrificiis ritè celebrandis majorem nullam ceremoniam fuisse videmus, quam nihil sibi conscire, bonos ac pios esse. GYRALD. Syntag. p. 17.

says Bishop Taylor, "which comes to these springs of salvation, as the hart to the water-brooks, panting and thirsting, longing and passionate, weary of sin and hating vanity, and reaching out the heart and hands to Christ."

The different modes of producing and increasing the happy dispositions which render the sacramental feast an object of desire and delight, must vary* according to the different attainments, ages, moral conduct, and other circumstances, of different persons. Books of devotion, such as "Companions to the Altar," and "Week's Preparations," may not be necessary to learned professors of divinity, or persons of good education and religious habits; but they may be very serviceable to the husbandman from his plough, the weaver from his loom, the mariner from his cabin, the wife from her cradle, and for all the industrious tribe, who are making themselves useful to the community, while they are labouring for a morsel of food, and have little leisure, but on the Sabbath-day, for attending to the bread of life. The best advice that can be given to such persons is, that they apply to their minister to point out the proper book for the occasion, and to give them the best instruction himself in private, as it is to be concluded he does in the pulpit. The superior orders will generally be well able to find out proper books for themselves, if they are seriously desirous of information.†

* Qui non meretur quotidiè accipere, non meretur post annum suscipere. AUGUST. on Matt. vi.

At (in vitando Sacramento) aiunt se Domino deferre reverentiam. Quis est qui magis honorat; qui mandatis obtemperet, an qui resistat? AMBROS. de Pæn. lib. 1. cap. 1.

† Inter Catholicos non est annumerandus qui temporibus Pascha, Pentecostes, et Nativitatis Domini non communicaverit. Concil. Elib.

SECTION XXVI.

The Obligation to Frequency of Communion considered.

WITH respect to frequency or infrequency of communion, the dictates of every man's conscience, supposing him well disposed and competently informed, afford the best direction. "The law of the church* must be his least measure; the custom of the parish, where he resides, his usual measure; the spirit of devotion his certain measure: but he who neglects it habitually does, by implication, say, that the Holy Sacrament is contemptible."†

The obligation to frequency of communion will appear from a due consideration of the design and end of the institution. It is intended to procure an union with the God of our salvation; and that union procures, a necessary, (consequent, or concomitant) effect; sanctification and pardon. We are baptized but once; but we are to communicate, without limitation to the number of times, while life continues.

"By baptism we are united to the mystical body of Christ, which is, his church; and since church-membership is not only an outward, but a public, rather than a private thing, one single administration of such rite is sufficient to make that union lasting."‡

Βελτιστοι οι ανθρωποι προς τους Θεους βαδιζοντες.

PYTHAGORAS apud Plutarch. de Superstitione.

Justificatio et sanctificatio sunt actus quidem perpetuus, in quo, et Deus semper donat, et homo semper recipit.

VOSSIUS de Sacr. Vi et Effic.

* "It is to be feared that they who never receive but at Easter, and never fast but in Lent, never repent till they die!" ROGERS.

"If thou foundest it a Feast, (that is, tookest delight in it,) God should hear oftener of thee." ROGERS.

† Bishop Taylor. ‡ Bishop Warburton.

"But by the sacrament of the Lord's supper we are united, as members, to the spiritual body of Christ, that is, his grace. This is an inward union, and lasts no longer than the right disposition of the heart and affections shall continue; and this, by reason of our corrupt nature, and perpetual commerce with an evil world, being always impairing, it has always occasion to be strengthened and renewed. This is the office of the Holy Spirit; whose gracious influence more peculiarly sanctifies that holy season, the season of communion. Hence the use and necessity of frequent communion, intimated in the words of the institution, "Do this in remembrance of me," which imply the continuing to receive his benefaction, which is conveyed to us from time to time, and "as often as we show forth "the Lord's death till he come." So true is the account given in this sacred rite in the articles of our church: "That the sacrament of the Lord's supper is not only a badge or token of a Christian man's profession, but rather a certain and sure witness and effectual sign of grace, and God's good-will towards us; by which he doth work invisibly in us: and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in him."*

This Sacrament being then a sacrament of spiritual nutrition, is to be repeated so long as we continue in this sublunary state, and subject to spiritual infirmity, disease, and famine. In such a state, spiritual death must be the consequence of refusing sustenance.

If indeed any man be confident that the grace which he received at his last celebration of the Eucharist is not impaired, and that he has not committed sin, since the forgiveness he then obtained, he may perhaps, have reason to think the repetition

* Article XXV.

of the Sacrament is to him not absolutely necessary. But who can possess such confidence without presumption? If we say that we have no sin, and feel no decay of grace, while we continue in a corrupt world, and carry in our bosoms a natural propensity to error and to vice, we probably deceive ourselves, or wish to deceive others by hypocrisy. "A man, one would think, cannot too often commemorate our Lord and his passion, nor too often return him devout thanks and praises; nor too often repeat his resolutions of amendment; nor too often renew his solemn engagements; nor too often receive pardon of sins, and fresh succours of divine grace."*

But prudence and discretion have a proper place here, as well as in every thing in which human beings are concerned. We must be careful not so to familiarize the rite by frequency, as to lose all reverence for it by performing it unprepared, with minds engaged in the occupations of the world, and little attention to the importance of the solemnity. "Divines of all ages of the church, except in the first, and part of the second, century, seem inclined to abate of frequency rather than of strictness of preparation or qualification."† The want of preparation is the only allowable impediment to frequency of communion; but this is an impediment which every man, unless under very peculiar circumstances may himself remove.

Strictness of examination is required, yet this is not to be pleaded as an excuse, either for a total, a frequent, or a long neglect of the Sacrament. A man may say that he comes not to the table because he is not prepared; and so far he assigns a good reason; but if he should be farther asked, why he is not prepared, he can only make some trifling insufficient excuse, or remain speechless.

* Waterland. † Ibid.

When we consider the frailty of man and the brevity of life, it must be deemed presumption ever to continue long unprepared for the Sacrament; because at the same time, we must be unprepared to die. If we keep our minds in a constant state of preparation, it will certainly be right to communicate, not only on all the great festivals of the church, but whenever opportunity offers, and at the same time no reasonable cause urges us to postpone it. Precise rules cannot be given; neither would they be followed.

One admonition, however, of universal importance, may be offered; which is, that though, with respect to frequency of communion, much is left to the discretion of the church, and much to the private judgment of individual Christians; yet the omission must never be the effect of contempt, or even of negligence.*

* "It is in this duty as in that of prayer, God has annexed blessings to it; but then he requires that we should be in a proper frame of mind to be partakers of them; for we may ask and yet not receive; as may be the case when we come to the communion table from worldly views and for temporal advantage alone. As when any man receives the Sacrament merely to qualify himself for a place. I say merely; for no doubt a man may receive with as much devotion when he has obtained a place, as at any other time. The law supposes (while it enjoins this as the best evidence a man can give of his hearty approbation of our happy constitution in church and state,) the law, I say, supposes that the person comes with due dispositions; otherwise, by the rubrick, which is part of the law of the land, the curate is bound to repel him, as well as any other: and it is well worth observing, that though in the Test Act there is a clause to oblige the courts of law to administer the oaths and receive the declaration, yet there is no clause to direct the clergy to administer the Sacrament to any person, though possessed of the highest post; so that this matter stands, without the least alteration, just as it did, before the act was made."

Occasional Writer, No. 9, 1736.

SECTION XXVII.

Of administering the Sacrament to the Sick and Dying.

In one of those little cheap tracts so often alluded to, which are addressed to the unlearned, in order to disabuse them of their veneration for, and confidence in, the Eucharist, the simple person introduced by the author to receive instruction, asks this question among many others: "Are we authorized to consider the celebration of the Lord's supper, as in any degree an appointed means for procuring the remission of our sins?"—The answer is brief and peremptory—"No;" and the questionist is authoritatively informed, (as we have seen in the preceding pages,) that, if ever the Sacrament is administered to the sick and dying, as an appointed means of obtaining the remission of sins, "the participant is deceived, and the rite misapplied."

That present remission of sins is annexed to the Sacrament worthily received has, I hope, been already proved. It is the doctrine of our own church, and of every church which has received the Apostles' and the Nicene creeds. It was the doctrine of the primitive churches, even of the churches over which St. Paul presided; it is the express language of Scripture; St. Paul and his converts actually did obtain present pardon; it is implied in the notion of justification; it is supposed in the daily use of the Lord's prayer; it is expressly the annexed benefit of one sacrament, thus to wash for the present remission of sins; and therefore, if in the other, we drink blood

shed for the remission of sins, we do in that also receive this same benefit.*

Taking it now therefore for proved and granted, that remission of sins is annexed to the Sacrament, I venture to affirm, that when it is administered in order to afford comfort and hope to the sick and dying, the penitent participants are not deceived, and the rite is applied with peculiar propriety. They want spiritual, as well as bodily comfort; and nothing, they themselves declare, can give it to them, but the Sacrament. They trust in this holy rite, when they can trust in nothing else; and shall a cavilling theologist, in opposition to the church, whose authority he has bound himself to obey, and in opposition to Scripture, on which the church has founded its authority, refuse this last solace to the poor sufferer who implores it? Forbid it Christian charity and common humanity!

"But it is objected," says Bishop Cleaver, "that the Lord's supper, thus understood, may, if administered on a death-bed, deceive the communicant, and encourage by-standers to defer their repentance, in hopes of cancelling all accounts of sin by one single act of devotion. It may be so; but this abuse is no way chargeable on the doctrine itself. If the sick be not really penitent, so far as may appear to human judgment, they are to blame, who, in such circumstances, administer the Sacrament. If the case be doubtful, the propriety of it will be doubtful; or, if the communicant be in a disposition only to repent, the delay of this rite should be the measure first suggested, or if in extreme cases it be admi-

* These points are proved to the satisfaction of candid minds in the Three Sermons on the Lord's supper, preached by Bishop Cleaver, at Oxford.

nistered, the hopes of pardon should be held out in proportion to the apparent penitence; and, in truth, where the feeble promise of amendment is offered only in circumstances which too probably may preclude the means of fulfilling that promise, the value of every religious pledge will be at best but suspicious: and it belongs to an omniscient Judge only to appreciate that, to which he alone can apportion the just degree of retribution. But these and many other cases of discretion must be settled by the doctrine itself well considered, not the doctrine made to yield to the abuses, which may occasionally creep into the practice of this or any other church."

As this matter is of great importance and very delicate, I have thought it right to support my opinions by those of a learned prelate, who appears to have studied the subject with much attention, and has written upon it with great ability.

But I have no reluctance in declaring it my full conviction, that when a poor dying mortal humbly and heartily desires to receive the Holy Sacrament, the priest may administer it without scruple or strictness of examination, (which time and circumstances will hardly admit,) and if he is in error, he will be pardoned by the God of mercy. How must it aggravate the sufferings of a sick and dying man, stretched on the bed of pain, and distressed in mind, to be told, on his expressing his earnest desire of the Sacrament, and his sincere faith and repentance, that he is not fit for it, and that it cannot be administered to him! To the minister's discretion it must be left to converse with the sufferer in such a manner and on such topics as circumstances may indicate and allow; and if, after all proper explanations, the sufferer continues to desire the Eucharist, I should think it a want of Christian charity to refuse it. A

mistake of this kind, if it should be a mistake, committed through tenderness and compassion, though it may be severely censured at the tribunal of human judgment, will be viewed with indulgence at the throne of supreme wisdom and mercy.

Be it ever remembered, that in extreme cases, like that which I now suppose, "the hopes of pardon are to be held out in proportion to the apparent penitence;" so says the judicious prelate above cited; but he does not say, nor will any man of sound understanding and a feeling heart say, that in such extreme cases, the Sacrament is to be refused to the sick and dying, when they eagerly desire it. Far from the bed of affliction, sickness, and death, be such wretched comforters, such severe and austere priests, as, relying on their own self-conceit, would deny the last consolation, when earnestly requested by an agonizing fellow-creature. The errors of charity, will, I hope and believe, be ever pardoned by the God of love and mercy.

SECTION XXVIII.

The small Number of Persons, comparatively speaking, who receive the Sacrament throughout a Country, like our own, professing Christianity.

If the sacrament of the Lord's supper, as the church asserts, "be generally necessary to salvation," and many most important benefits, (as I hope has been proved,) be annexed to it, how greatly is it to be lamented, that few in comparison, ever think of receiving it. Select any great and populous parish in the kingdom, and you will perhaps find, that scarcely one in ten among the inhabitants, has done that which the church declares "to be gene-

rally necessary to salvation."* The poor and laborious are certainly no less interested in communicating at the altar table than persons in the middle and higher classes; yet a very great majority of the poor and laborious are found to neglect it entirely, and to resign their breath without having once tasted what is called in Scripture, the bread of life, the means of their soul's subsistence.

To a mind which duly reflects, this consideration cannot but be matter of charitable regret. It must operate in exciting the endeavours of all who have opportunities, to recommend the performance of this duty to every individual, from the prince and the peer to the peasant and the beggar. The duty of receiving the Sacrament, and of preparing for it, should be the frequent subject of animated addresses from the pulpit; of affectionate instructions in the family; and of friendly converse in the cottage.

The old canons of the church are very strict in requiring a general attendance on this holy rite. They declare all persons who come to church and join in the prayers, and yet turn their backs on the Eucharist, excommunicate. That such severity should be revived is not desirable. Many might be compelled by it to attend with minds unprepared, and in a state which might render them unworthy. Example and persuasion are the modes to be now adopted. Instruction in the nature, end, design, and benefits, must be first given with patient perseverance. Little tracts should be distributed; but caution should be used, lest those books, which, by explain-

* "If there be a man who comes to qualify himself for a place upon the Test Act, and who looks upon the church service as an idle, insignificant parade, to him God is no more present at the communion table than at the gaming table."

TUCKER'S *Light of Nature.*

ing away the mystery and benefits, render the Sacrament a mere nullity, should insinuate themselves; and lest the imitators of Bishop Hoadly should find their way into the cottage, instead of Bishop Wilson. The pulpit is certainly the proper place for instructing the poor; but unfortunately the very poor, those who are ashamed of their ragged and squalid appearance, seldom enter the church. In many churches there is no place for them, yet of such was Lazarus and other paupers recorded in the gospel, to whom the compassionate Jesus showed particular attention. Tracts very short and very plain should be placed in their hands; and though many of them cannot read, yet they usually find somebody who can and will read to them, especially since the establishment of Sunday schools. It is something to turn their minds to the subject. The poor are always pleased with the attention and solicitude of their superiors in their favour; and are often converted by this circumstance alone from the error of their ways, from drunkenness and idleness to industry and frugality. I know nothing more that can be done, except, indeed, the zeal of well-disposed persons should lead them to make friendly and domiciliary visits to the poor, in order to enlighten their minds in things which so much belong unto their peace. Such would be a godlike office; and they who undertake it must not be offended by the scoffs and ridicule of worldly-minded and infidel by-standers. I believe there are many among the sectaries, who, animated with sincere piety, perform such offices as these, and are successful. No liberal and truly Christian mind will despise men whatever opprobrious name their sect may bear, who do so much good, and, in consequence of it, suffer so much evil, as the contempt and reproach of their acquaintance. To go about doing good, and to

be reviled and persecuted for it, we should remember, was the lot of him who was our Great Exemplar.

But it must not be supposed that the neglect of the Sacrament is confined to the poor. The man of business, the man of pleasure, and the man of ambition, seem to take little notice of it; whether from thoughtlessness, from contempt, or from the multitude of their occupations, is not easy to determine. All that can be farther said to such persons is, that the churches are open, and they are invited to enter and receive instruction; that treatises are written and offered to their perusal; and that if they will not enter the one, nor read the other, on themselves only must fall the evil consequence. In the day of pain, sickness, or some other adversity, they may learn to feel their want of spiritual consolation. In the day of health and wealth they are too apt to be under the influence of pride, intellectual as well as worldly pride, which renders the heart obdurate, and the ear deaf to religious admonition. But an hour will come when conscience will sound an alarm.

The persons above spoken of, whether rich or poor, are spoken of, as what they profess to be,—Christians. Sceptics, infidels, and conceited superficial readers of French philosophy, the modern rationalists, are a numerous tribe, who, on principle, neglect the Eucharist. Argument has little effect on them, for they are enthusiasts in their way, enthusiasts in the school of sophistry. The school of adversity may, perhaps, afford them at some period of their lives a better lesson. The grace of God may find entrance into their hearts when softened by affliction. The Sacrament may then be sought with an avidity increased by the remembrance of their present neglect.

However that may be, it is certain that Christians

cannot live consistently with their profession, without participation of the Lord's supper; and no less certain, that the greater number do not participate. This phenomenon in the religious world, will fully justify my humble attempt, and calls for the active exertions of all who wish to be faithful ministers of the gospel.

It may surely repress the mistaken zeal of the professional depreciators of the Sacrament, when they see how few assemble at the communion table; few, in comparison with those who never approach it. If the benefits are little, or none, who will incur the danger? The dangers, it is formidably described, of receiving unworthily?* Even prudent and sober-

* On the subject of worthily receiving, I shall give some of the sentiments of an old and sensible divine; modernizing his language, and illustrating his meaning with additional observations.

"Is any man," he asks, "so plentifully blessed with grace that he can be said to partake the Holy Sacrament worthily?"

To which he answers: "One may perform an action worthily in a threefold respect: First, worthily, dignitate æqualitatis; as, the labourer is worthy of his hire: This is the worthiness of equality; because the performance and the payment preserve an equilibrium in the scales of justice. This worthiness claims the reward due to it, and he who denies or detains the reward does the worthy party a wrong and injury. Now, no man can receive the Sacrament with this kind of worthiness. The church itself, in her liturgy, disavows all pretentions to this kind of worthiness at the communion. We are there first instructed to say, we are not worthy so much as to gather the crumbs under thy table; and to add afterwards, though we be unworthy through our manifold sins to offer unto thee any sacrifice.

"Secondly: We may perform an action worthily, dignitate convenientiæ, aptitudinis or decentiæ, in the worthiness of congruity, aptitude, or decency, which consists, though not in a perfect and exact proportion of the performance to the recompense, yet in some fitness, congruity, and resemblance to that which is required: as in Scripture, bring forth therefore fruits meet for or worthy of repentance; that is, such as bear no repugnancy and contradiction to the repentance you profess, but are in some degree agreeable and suitable to it. So in the phrases, walk worthy of the Lord

minded men may, in their fears, be tempted to believe that it is better to abstain, where the benefit is represented by great theologians as doubtful, or rather none at all, while a possibility of incurring the greatest penalties is declared in the communion service. Ill-grounded terror on one side, and presumptuous contempt on the other, are causes of that

worthy of your calling, worthy of the gospel,* it is meant that your life should not disgrace your creed; nor your practice be inconsistent with your profession. And we cannot but believe that peccata surreptitia, sins of infirmity, (not indeed from their exemption from wickedness, but from God's abundant mercy,) are compatible with this kind of worthiness, the worthiness of congruity. In this acceptation of the word 'worthily,' we may receive the Sacrament worthily; that is, so fitted and prepared, as that our state shall bear some resemblance or congruity to the solemn service of sacramental communion.

"The third kind of worthiness is, dignitas dignationis; the worthiness of acceptance; that low degree of worthiness which God for Christ's sake, vouchsafes (dignatur) to accept in mercy and in pity to our infirmities. That man is worthy who is accepted as worthy, by the condescension of the Supreme Being, not weighing our merits, but dispensing with rigid justice, and supplying our defects by his forgiveness or indulgence. If men should deem that worthy which is not so, or shall prize a pebble as a pearl, the thing so falsely estimated acquires no new value by their mistaken appreciation, but if God vouchsafe to esteem men worthy, then, as every thing is really such as it is accounted to be by the great Disposer of all things, his valuation gives a worth not inherent in them, but superadded and adscititious. 'I have blessed him, (saith Isaac of Jacob) yea and he shall be blessed.'† So God has accounted certain persons worthy; yea, and they shall be worthy: 'they shall walk with me in white,' as we read in the Book of Revelations, 'for they are worthy.'"‡

"Let us then bring with us, when we come to the Sacrament, the worthiness of fitness and congruity, and God of his goodness will reward us, by voluntarily bestowing upon us the dignitas dignationis, the worthiness of acceptance;—that is, he will vouchsafe to make us worthy, by overlooking or pardoning our unworthiness."

THOMAS FULLER.

* Col. i. 10. Ephes. iv. 1. 1 Phil. i. 27.

† Gen. xxvii. 33. ‡ Rev. iii. 4.

neglect of the Sacrament which is every where visible.

Every minister of a parish may assure himself, that an addition to the number of communicants, is one of the most certain proofs of an increase of piety among his parishioners, and of his success in the discharge of his ministerial office. When the religious principle is strong it will lead men to delight in the feast of piety and charity: but when such a banquet is offered in vain, it is an infallible indication of a lost or vitiated appetite.

The Papists were deemed highly culpable for denying the cup to the laity. May not those ministers incur similar blame, who, in this Protestant country, deny both the cup and the bread to their parishioners; which in effect they do, when, upon this subject, they neglect to inform ignorance, or to stimulate indifference? When they suffer whole parishes, and very populous parishes, to neglect the Lord's supper, except, perhaps, in a few instances, at Easter, Whitsuntide, and Christmas? There is reason to believe that throughout a very great part of this extensive empire, professing Christianity, not one in a hundred ever communicates: and yet the church teaches that the Sacrament is generally necessary to salvation. Whoever wishes to revive the religious principle, should bestow particular pains in recommending to the people of his parish frequent communion.

SECTION XXIX.

Of communicating internally, or spiritually, in private, in certain Cases of Necessity.

Circumstances may arise in which persons of great piety and devotion must wish to communicate with

Christ, and their fellow-Christians; and yet be unavoidably prevented from doing it in the established manner, by the want of a church, a minister, the elements, or a convenient opportunity. Persons on their travels into foreign countries where a different persuasion prevails; in ships making long voyages; in prisons among enemies; in exile; in sudden sickness; in unforeseen accidents; in distress of mind requiring immediate relief; and at the approach of death, may desire the assistance of a pastor, and the sacramental ordinance of the church, without the possibility of obtaining either in due time. Is there no way opened for these to procure satisfaction to their minds, if they are convinced that the participation of the Sacrament is necessary to their present peace and future welfare?

I venture to assure them, that in cases like these, and all others of absolute necessity, they may communicate spiritually in solitude, with humble but reasonable confidence, that they shall derive the benefits of grace and pardon.

But because in cases of great importance my mind feels relieved by relying on the support and authority of others, I will quote the words of Bishop Taylor on the subject:

"Such persons as these, if they duly prepare themselves, and earnestly desire that they could actually communicate, may place themselves upon their knees, and, building an altar in their heart, celebrate the death of Christ; and in holy desire, join with all the congregations of the Christian world, who that day celebrate the Holy Communion; and they may serve (or promote) their devotion by the form of prayers and all actions eucharistical, changing only such circumstantial words as relate to the actual participation.

"Concerning which I only add the pious advice of a religious person: Let every faithful soul be ready and desirous often to receive the holy Eucharist to the glory of God; but if he cannot so often communicate sacramentally as he desires, let him not be afflicted, but remain in perfect resignation to the will of God, and dispose himself to a spiritual communion; for no man, and no thing, can hinder a well-disposed soul, but that by holy desires she may, if she please, communicate every day.

"To this nothing is to be added, but that this way is never to be used but upon necessity; not upon peevishness and spiritual pride; not in the spirit of schism and fond opinions; not in despite of our brother, or contempt or condemnation of the holy congregations of the Lord; but with a living faith and an actual charity, and great humility, and with the spirit of devotion, and that so much the more intensely and fervently as the person (thus administering to himself) is really troubled for the want of actual participation in the communion of saints; and then that is true which St. Austin said, (crede et manducasti.) 'Believe, and thou hast eaten.'"

That the above doctrine is countenanced by our church may be concluded from a liberal construction of the rubrick affixed to the office for the Communion of the Sick, in the liturgy.

"If a man either by reason of sickness, or for want of warning in due time to the curate, or for lack of company to receive with him, or by any other just impediment, do not receive the Sacrament of Christ's body and blood, the curate shall instruct him, that if he do truly repent him of his sins, and steadfastly believe that Christ hath suffered death upon the cross for him, and shed his blood for his redemption, earnestly remembering the benefits he

hath thereby, and giving him hearty thanks therefore, he doth eat and drink the body and blood of our Saviour Christ profitably to his soul's health, although he doth not receive the Sacrament with his mouth."

The excellent Bishop Wilson has supplied a short Form of Spiritual Communion, as he terms it, in his very useful book on the Lord's supper: a book which perhaps has done more good to society in promoting religion and virtue among the mass of the people, than the lucubrations of the most learned theologians.*

SECTION XXX.

The Spirit and Circumstances of the present Times render Zeal and Diligence in defending and diffusing the great and mysterious Doctrines of Christianity peculiarly expedient.

That these are not times for diminishing the force of religious principle among mankind, will be readily

* Persons engaged in the business of the world, and of high rank and consequence in the world, are often, from inattention, wonderfully ignorant of all that concerns religion.

And here I may introduce a distinction of the schools between nescientia and ignorantia.

The nescientes are such as know not many things, which either they are not bound to know, or have not the means of knowing.

The ignorantes are those who know not what it is their duty to know, and what they have also the means of knowing.

In this sense of the word "ignorant," some of the most knowing and learned of the age are ignorant; that is, they are well acquainted with things which they are not bound in duty to know, but destitute of due information in things which they and every man is bound in duty to know; the things which belong unto their peace. In the language of the schools, they are not nescient, but they are ignorant.

Nescientia est simplex carentia scientiæ; ignorantia est nescientia eorum quæ quis scire debet.

To increase their misfortune they are ignorant of their ignorance.

Thomas Aquinas.

acknowledged by all who form a just estimate of them. The adversaries of the church and its doctrines are numerous and indefatigable. They multiply their publications, and, as a writer, frequently quoted in this volume, observes, characterise them "with a profligate intrepidity of assertion, which bears down the native diffidence of young minds, imposes upon their candour, and, precluding all suspicion of doubt, induces them to believe propositions which have neither truth nor the colour of truth."

"And possibly," he proceeds, "it never was more expedient or more necessary, I do not except any period of time in this kingdom, to inculcate, to explain, to enforce, the great truths of religion in public and in private, in season and out of season; to make them the topics of domestic intercourse, of academic instructions, the occupation of the pulpit, and the ultimate scope of all our learned labours. It is now again become eminently incumbent on those who believe the plain truths of the gospel, to profess their belief, and of those who profess, to give a reason of their hope, as well as to manifest its existence by that animated zeal which is its genuine effect; returning again, as often as occasion shall make it necessary to the principles of the doctrine of Christ, and laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and faith towards God, lest under the present security of our establishment, we suffer the heresy of some, whilst it flatters the broad infidelity of others, to make gradual and individual depredations upon the subjects of our holy faith, more effectual and pernicious than the avowed exertions of united force."

When it is considered that various pamphlets, read by many who scarcely read any thing else, have long been systematically employed in extolling every book and tract written against what is contemptu-

ously termed orthodoxy; and in depreciating the most respectable works in support of the sublimest doctrines of Christianity, it will cease to excite wonder, that superficial minds have very generally caught the infection of scepticism* and heresy; and

* The disputers of this world cannot see (as they urge as an excuse for their scepticism) any virtue in faith. They think that faith is involuntary; and necessarily produced or prevented by the evidence of the fact, or the contrary. But religious faith is a faith (partly sui generis) of a particular nature, and differs greatly from mere historical faith, or the assent of the mind inevitably consequent on demonstration. The will is much concerned in producing that faith which the gospel requires, and which is to be considered as a moral virtue, acceptable to Heaven, and required in a Christian believer. On this subject I wish to submit the sentiments of Bishop Taylor to every reader, whose mind is not quite closed by pride and prejudice.

"In faith there must be an act of the will as well as of the understanding, and as much love, as of reasoning or discourse, (Discursûs, i. e. Argumentation).

"For he that only consents to an article, because it is evident, is indeed convinced; but has no excellency in his faith, but what is natural, nothing that is gracious and moral.

"True Christian faith must have in it something of obscurity. Something must be made up by duty and by obedience. We must trust the evidence of God in the obscurity of the thing. The testimony of God must be clear, and the thing in all other senses, not clear; and then to trust (or have faith in) the article; because God hath said it, it must have in it an excellency which God loves and which he will reward. In order to this, it is highly considerable, that the greatest argument to prove our religion, is the goodness and the holiness of it. It is that which makes peace and friendship; content and consent, which unites all relations and endears the relatives. It relieves the needy and defends the widow. It ends strife and makes love endless. All other arguments can be opposed and attacked by wit and malice; but against the goodness of religion no man can speak; by which it appears, that the greatest argument is that which moves love, intending or proceeding by love to convince the understanding.

"And then with respect to those who can inquire farther; their inquiries also must be modest and humble, according to the nature of things and to the designs of God. They must not disbelieve

it will the same time appear highly expedient, that the diligence of every sincere believer should be exercised in the defence of opinions; the prevalence

an article of Christianity which is not proved like a conclusion in geometry. They must not be witty to object, and curious to inquire beyond their limits. For some are so ingeniously miserable, that they will never believe a proposition in Divinity, if any thing can be said against it. They will be credulous enough in all the affairs of their life, but impenetrable by a sermon or the gospel. They will believe the word of a man, and trust to the promise of their neighbour, but a promise of Scripture signifies nothing, unless it can be proved like a proposition in mathematics. If Sempronius tell them a story, it is sufficient he be a just man and the narrative be probable; but though religion be taught by many excellent men, who gave their lives for a testimony, this shall not pass for truth, till there is no objection left to stand against it. The reason of these things is plain. They do not love the thing. Their interest is against it. They have no joy in religion. They are not willing and desirous that the thing shall appear true. When love is the principle, the thing is easy to the understanding. The objections are nothing. The arguments are good. The preachers are in the right.

"Faith assents to the resolutions of the gospel, not only because they are well-proved, but because they are excellent things; not only because my reason is convinced, but my reason yields upon the fairer terms, because my affections are gained. For if faith were an assent to an article but just so far as it is demonstrated, then faith were no virtue, and infidelity no sin. In this there is no choice and no refusal. But where that which is probable, is also naturally indemonstrable, and yet the conclusion is that, in which we must rejoice, and that, for which we must earnestly contend, and that in the belief of which we serve God, and that for which we must be ready to die; there it is certain, that the understanding, observing the credibility, and the will, being pleased with the excellency, they produce a zeal of belief; because they together, (the will and the understanding) make up a demonstration.

"For a reason can be opposed by a reason, and an argument by an argument; but if I love my religion, nothing can take me from it, unless it can pretend to be more useful and more amiable, more perfective, and more excellent than Heaven and immortality, a kingdom and a crown of peace, and all the glories of the eternal God.

"No man ever yet affectionately and earnestly desired to believe, but he did believe." Bishop Taylor.

of which he must think essential not only to his own, but to the happiness of the whole human race.

I dwell not on the ill effects of that spurious philosophy which has been imported from a neighbouring country, because they are obvious to every observer; but, I must remark, that their importation and dissemination in England have been greatly facilitated by the preparatory labours of many insidious enemies to Christianity at home.

Dr. Waterland, a man of singular erudition and sagacity, who greatly served the cause of Christianity and the church of England, and, compared with whom, the opponents of his doctrine, in the present day, appear very slenderly furnished with learning, has asserted, "that, in general, all discussions which have for their object immediately to lessen the dignity and importance of the Lord's supper, are in reality designed as so many attacks upon the divinity of Christ."

This mode of attacking the divinity of Christ, is like the subterraneous operations of a mine in a siege. The destruction intended is not suspected, and therefore not repelled, or even resisted, till resistance is too late. The outworks must be preserved, if we would secure the citadel. The divinity of Christ is indeed a topic too large to be entered upon in this place; but, however a defender of it may be exposed to the heavy displeasure of its opponents, I must bear my testimony, that whatever tends to invalidate that doctrine, contributes, at the same time, to the utter extermination of Christianity.

If, according to Dr. Waterland, to lessen the dignity and importance of the sacraments be to attack the divinity of Christ; then, to support and enhance their dignity and importance, must conduce to the defence of that sublime and most momentous tenet.

The true doctrine of the sacraments is worthy of all possible reverence and esteem, for its own sake; but it is also highly worthy of zealous support as connected with the divinity of our Saviour: that doctrine, which gives a sanction to his precepts above all that can be pretended to in the schools of ancient Egypt, Rome, or Athens; where, nevertheless, admirable morality was delivered from the suggestions of unassisted reason.

They, therefore, who would preserve Christianity, in its full vigour and its highest purity, will be active in preserving among the congregation over which they may preside, and in all situations in which they may have influence over numbers, the dignity and importance of the sacraments, by explaining their nature, pointing out their benefits, and recommending a frequent communion. The Eucharist should ever be represented, not only as a duty, in which man alone is concerned, but as a rite, in the performance of which, God condescends to interpose, and by the agency of his Holy Spirit to participate. It is this which gives it a superiority above all other modes and expressions of faith and devotion practised in any age or in any region of the universe.

Throughout this treatise, and all other papers which I have ever written on the important doctrines of divinity, I wish, from unaffected diffidence, to be supported by the opinion of great scholars and good men, who were, or are, the ornaments of their times. I hope to be sheltered under their wings from the shafts of angry heretics and sophists, which are often tipt with poison, though emitted from a feeble bow. The doctrine which I have just mentioned, that the Eucharist is a rite, in which God bears a part, shall be brought forward under the protection of Waterland. He says, "In the first place let it be noted,

that the Eucharist is not merely a duty of ours, but a sacred rite, in which God himself bears a part." The doctrine of our church, and of all Christian churches, early and late, is much the same with what our Homilies teach us; namely, that "in the sacraments God embraces us, and offereth himself to be embraced by us." A learned writer observes, and proves, that a sacrament relates to that which flows from God to us; and he adds, "that it is a thing neither denied nor forgotten by any, but is evident from what the Scriptures teach concerning Baptism and the Lord's supper."* Indeed the Socinian scheme is, to exclude God, as it were, out of the sacraments, and to allow him no part in them, but to reduce all to a bare human performance or positive duty; but we have not so learned Christ.

In the case of one of the sacraments, Baptism, what does the infant do? a duty? No; a rite is performed upon the infant by man, and grace to complete the sacrament is bestowed by God. In the Eucharist, more indeed is done by the receiver; but still God applies the benefit, and it is, by the gracious ordinance of Heaven, a communion.†

* Towerson on the Sacraments, p. 12. Vossius, to the same purpose, says: "Quemadmodum fides est quasi manus nostra, quâ nos quærimus et accipimus: sic Verbum et Sacramenta sunt quasi manus Dei, quibus is nobis offert et confert, quod a fide nobis petitur et accipitur:"—As faith is, as it were, our hand, by which we seek and receive; so the Word and the Sacraments are, as it were, the hand of God by which he offers and confers upon us whatever is thus sought and received by faith.

† "Jamais l'Eglise de Dieu ne sera sanctifiée, ni jamais le Christianisme ne sera bien reformé, que par le bon usage de la communion. Raisonnons tant qu'il nous plaira; il en faudra toujours revenir à ces adorables paroles du Sauveur; si vous ne mangez la chair du fils de l'homme, vous n'aurez point la vie en vous: au contraire, si quelqu'un mange de ce pain, il vivra éternellement; il vivra en ce monde par la grâce, et dans l'autre, par la gloire." Bourdaloue.

SECTION XXXI.

Of the Church, as distinguished from the World; and the Expediency of preserving our union with the Church by Sacramental Communion.

It seems probable that few, in comparison, have given themselves the trouble to form a true idea of the Catholic church; though it is absolutely necessary, not only that its nature should be rightly understood, but that every man, who professes himself a Christian, should become an incorporated member of it. What is the church, is a question that many cannot answer.

According to the plain deductions from Scripture, mankind are divided into two distinct tribes; those who belong to the kingdom of Christ, and those who belong to the world. The kingdom of Christ is the Catholic church; but here it must be observed, that the church comprehends all true believers in Christ in every part of Christendom, laity as well as clergy, however distinguished by different names, or subdivided into national or other less numerous sects or societies. It is the Catholic church that is meant when it is contradistinguished from the world; it is that grand society of human beings which is united to Jesus Christ, as the limbs to the head of the body.

The word Ecclesia (the Greek for church) originally signifies an evocation, or a calling out. It imports, therefore, that they who are in the church are called out of a wicked and unbelieving world, and admitted into a society of which Jesus Christ is the head. The English word church (κυριακη, *kyriace*, kirk, or church) signifies a house or society appropriated to the Lord (κυριω); a portion of mankind devoted to, and accepted by, the Author of our holy religion. It is obvious to all but the illiterate, that

the word church, when applied to a building, where a part of the people thus separated meet for the purposes of worship, is a popular term, and has deviated like many other words from its original and proper signification; which is that of a society separated from a wicked world, and rescued from perdition.

All human beings must belong to one or other of these classes; they must be members of the church or of the world; the world, I mean, in a scriptural sense. If they believe in Christianity, they must acknowledge the condition of those who are not of the church, but of the world, to be truly deplorable. If a limb be cut off from a living body it must die inevitably.

It should be the endeavour then of every serious man to make haste to escape from a situation, in which it is dangerous to continue; and to be incorporated with those who are in the way of peace and security. As Christ is the head of the church, so an evil spirit is represented in Scripture to be the prince of the world: the one is the Captain of Salvation; the other, often under the disguise of an angel of light, a tempter to sin, misery, and everlasting perdition. The sheep that are in the fold are under the protection of the good shepherd; but those who stray, become the victims of famine, or the ravenous wolf, "who goeth about seeking whom he may destroy."

This distinction between the church and the world is of prime importance, and is truly scriptural.

"I am well assured," says an ingenious author of an Essay on the Church, "that if this subject of the church, now so much neglected and almost forgotten, should come to be better considered; there would be more true piety and more peace, more of those

virtues which will be required in heaven, and which must therefore be first learned upon earth.

"Some think they can make their own church and so despise the word of God, and fall into infidelity. Others think they can make their own church, or even be a church unto themselves; and so fall into the delusions of enthusiasm, or the uncharitableness of schism. But as there is nothing to enlighten the minds of men in the doctrines of salvation but the word of God, so is there nothing that can unite their hearts and affections but the church of God:—"Ye are one bread and one body," saith the Apostle; "one body by partaking of one bread, and that can only be in the same communion.

"There are two societies of which we are members; of the world, by our natural birth; of the church, by our spiritual birth in baptism. When we are admitted into the Christian covenant, we renounce this world as a wicked world, and become members of the church, which is called the holy church. Both these societies are influential on those who belong to them; the one corrupts, the other sanctifies: therefore, it is of the last importance to mankind to consider and understand the difference between them.

"The world is composed of men lost by the Fall; disposed to all manner of evil; ignorant of the way of peace; at enmity with God, and with one another; delighting themselves in the pride of appearance and the vanity of distinction.

"The Scripture says, 'the whole world lieth in wickedness.' What human philosophy says of this description we are not to regard: if it is the description which stands in the Holy Scriptures, we are not to consider what men may say of it.

"Such is the world, and such are we all, so far as

we are members of it: God, therefore, of his infinite mercy, takes us out of this wicked society, and translates us into another. He delivers us from the power of darkness, and translates us into the kingdom of his dear Son; and without this translation, we are inevitably lost.

"This society is a body, of which the Holy Spirit is the life; and this life being communicated to those who are taken into the church, they are thereby made partakers of an holy life, which is elsewhere called the life of God; from which life they are alienated who are out of this society."*

The existence of this society no Christian can consistently deny, who repeats with sincerity the Creed of the Apostles; for he says, "I believe in the Holy Ghost, and the holy Catholic church;" and as it appears necessary to salvation, that every man should be a member of the church; the only question of importance remaining is, how we shall secure a continuance in the church, after being admitted into it unconsciously by baptism in early infancy? The answer is, by the sacrament of the Lord's supper.

"Within the notion of the church are comprehended,'' says Bishop Pearson, "good and bad, being both externally called, and both professing the same faith. 'For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a field, in which wheat and tares grow together till the harvest;'—'like unto a net that was cast into the sea and gathered of every kind;'—'like unto a floor in which is laid up both wheat and chaff;'—'like unto a marriage feast, in which some have on the wedding-garment, and some have not;'—

* "The nearest approach to perfection of the spiritual body wherein we are to rise again, which any man is capable of making, in his present situation, is the thing directly productive of salvation." TUCKER'S *Light of Nature.*

it is the ark of Noah in which were preserved beasts clean and unclean. This is that great house in which there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth, and some to honour and some to dishonour. There are many called, of all which the church consisteth; but there are few chosen, of those which are called, and thereby within the church." If any are not chosen, or are rejected after they are chosen, it is from their voluntary apostasy, or revolt, their own obstinate return to the world. It is a desertion.

Our first great business is to be among those who shall be chosen. The breach of the vow in baptism may perhaps exclude us; and who has not been guilty of such an infraction? What remains then but the sacrament of the Lord's supper, which is peculiarly calculated to reunite us to the head of the church; and to all the members by communion? It is not safe to neglect these offered means of preserving ourselves, during life, in the holy society, in the kingdom of heaven, of which Jesus Christ is the the Lord or Governor. We read, that the "Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. There is no other name given under heaven among men whereby they must be saved but the name of Jesus Christ:" and the benefit of his name cannot be given but to those in his kingdom; that is, in his church. As none were saved in the deluge but such as were within the ark of Noah, "so none," says Bishop Pearson, "shall ever escape the eternal wrath of God, which belong not to the church of God. This is the congregation of those persons here on earth, who shall hereafter meet in heaven." They are the Ecclesia, the Evocation.

The communion of saints, which in the Creed we profess to believe, and so often and solemnly repeat;

or the communion of good men, accepted members of the church of Christ, is best promoted by Eucharistical communion, or the sacrament of the Lord's supper. In that holy rite, we have a mystical union with Christ; "and," as the same great prelate observes, "the spiritual conjunction of the members to the head is the true foundation of the communion which one member hath with another; all the members living and increasing by the same influence which they receive from him."

In the transcendent polity of the kingdom of Christ, the Sacrament forms not only the bond of allegiance to the king; but of love, amity, and confederation among all the subjects, thus united in peace with each other, as well as in obedience to their prince, by the law of Christian love.

"If we walk in the light, as God is in the light, we have fellowship one with another."* When Christ sent St. Paul to the Gentiles, it was "to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Christ."† Those who are not of the Catholic church of Christ are still Gentiles, though called Christians and living in a Christian country: St. Paul, by his preaching, has not opened their eyes; they are not "turned from darkness to light," nor from "the power of Satan unto God." Consequently they have not received forgiveness of sins; but have voluntarily renounced the inheritance which they might have possessed, had they become or continued adopted children of Christ by union and communion.

Nothing that is here said on the church can give just cause of offence to dissenters of any denomi-

* 1 John, i. 6, 7. † Acts, xxvi. 18.

nation; for I mean by the church, as I have already said, the Catholic church, that comprehensive society, which takes within its pale all who sincerely believe in Christ, whatever be their form of worship, or their mode of government, and ecclesiastical discipline. By the world, in its scriptural sense, I by no means understand the sects which, believing in Christ, differ from a national church; but the professed men of the world, as they are called, who give themselves no concern at all about either the church or the religion of Christ; and who are, in truth, unbelievers, practical and theoretical, in the midst of all the means of instruction and grace. Many of the dissenters from the church of England, Papists, Presbyterians, Quakers, (whatever other denomination they may have chosen) have at all times displayed examples of faith, charity, and every Christian virtue. Such men are, without controversy, members of the Catholic church, though they may enjoy no secular splendour, power, or prosperity. I wish them to become members of our own most excellent church; but I cannot pronounce them to be excluded from the church of Christ, because they are out of our own; and who art thou, O man, who shall presume to exclude thy fellow-creature from the mercy of thine and his Almighty Maker?

I have only to add, that when they worthily communicate at the Eucharist, however their mode of administering may differ, as to the external ceremony, they are yet united to the body of Christ by faith and love. The Quakers, indeed, who administer not the Sacrament at all, are, I conceive under a great error; yet as their worship is spiritual, and their dispositions, evinced by their actions, remarkably charitable, I am willing to believe that they hold communion with all other sincere Christians, by

a mental or cordial communion, and so are not separated from the Catholic church. I wish any thing I could say, (though I wish without hope,) could prevail with them to take "the outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace." I lament what appears to me to be their mistake; but, far be it from any Christian, to say, that they are cut off by it from the body of Christ, while they exhibit proofs in other respects of a Christian faith and a Christian life.

Let us all, who name the name of Christ, "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace;" and remember, that God is the Father of us all, and will pity his own children, though narrow and severe theologists, from the schools, should pronounce their condemnation.

SECTION XXXII.

The Idea erroneous, that the Maintenance of the Dignity of the Catholic Church and the Rites of Christianity is unfavourable to civil Liberty.

Good order, subordination, tranquillity, justice, and mercy, are the legitimate and lovely children of true religion. It is a most unfortunate mistake, and a most unjust calumny, to think and affirm, that the Catholic church of Christ is hostile to the common rights of man in civil society.

Has any system of polity ever existed in the world which honoured the poorest and lowest ranks of men as they are honoured by the Christian religion? In the kingdom of Christ, which is the church, man is respected as man, exclusively of all regard to the external circumstances of riches, honours, or station.

All human beings in it are considered as one family, the offspring of one parent, and all cherished with maternal affection. The nursing-mother seems to say to the world, in the pathetic language and beautiful imagery of our Saviour, "How often would I have gathered my children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings; and ye would not."

I should love the religion of Christ even as a heathen philosopher and philanthropist, for its beneficent effects on the human race. It is the guide of youth, the support of age, the repose of the weary, the refuge of the miserable. It arrests the hand of the oppressor, by appalling his conscience; or, if haply the oppressor should proceed and prevail, it teaches the oppressed to look with confidence to a Deliverer, mighty to save.

Rome was free; yet slavery was permitted there, and slaves treated with singular inhumanity. We read in history, that when sick, they were often turned out of doors to take their chance; or sent in mockery to an island in the Tiber, to be cured by the god, Æsculapius. By the Roman laws a slave could not give evidence without the torture; and if a master were killed in his own house, all the slaves, however numerous, were put to death, though their innocence were manifest. But the Christian emperors made laws in favour of this unfortunate set of men, and their chains were at length broken asunder by the prevalence of Christianity.

Slavery might, perhaps, be revived in Europe, if it were compatible with this philanthropic religion. There are persons living without religious restraint, who seem, from the unfeeling insolence of their behaviour to their inferiors, sufficiently willing that hereditary slavery should be again established. But

Christianity has banished it, and nothing but a return to barbarous ignorance, and a total apostasy from Christ can ever restore it.

Before the introduction of Christianity, infants were often exposed to destruction by their libertine parents, as soon as born, and the practice scarcely deemed infamous; men were compelled to fight with wild beasts, and to murder each other for the entertainment of a theatre; and the amusement was not condemned as cruel or tyrannical, till Constantine, in consequence of his adoption of Christianity, restrained it by law; and Honorius afterwards abolished it. Punishments were severe beyond description, and prisoners were treated with wanton rigour; but Constantine abolished crucifixion, and ordered that prisoners should be tenderly used and conveniently accommodated with habitation. Hospitals and eleemosynary institutions for the poor were scarcely known before Christianity appeared: and now, if we look round a Christian metropolis, we shall find some of the largest and most sumptuous buildings entirely constructed and accommodated to the relief of every kind of distress and disease.

Are not these ample testimonies that Christianity is favourable to the mass of the people, if considered merely as members of an earthly society? Can it be adverse to the rights, when it so studiously consults the ease and happiness of men, not of the rich and great only, but of the meanest mortal honoured with the human form?

The horrors of war have been in some degree mitigated by the spirit of Christianity. Rigorous and cruel as it still continues, it is a little softened by the respect which Christianity has taught even the soldier in the ranks to pay to man as man. This mitigation is not to be attributed to the polished

manners which prevail in the enlightened nations of Europe, for it is impossible not to observe that a nation which claims the distinction of a superior polish, has been more cruel than ever, since it began to slight Christianity. The polish of the world is often but a varnish, and where pride and property are concerned, feels little sympathetic tenderness for the rights of humanity. But the Christian religion humbles pride and controuls avarice, by showing the littleness of all earthly grandeur, the comparative worthlessness of all riches, and by founding the true dignity of human nature on the gifts of divine grace.

The dignity of human nature is best promoted and preserved by the religion which teaches that God vouchsafes to communicate his own spirit to man; and in proportion as man learns to value himself, with a rational esteem for benefits conferred on him by his Creator, he will be the more reluctant to submit to such degradation as vilifies his very essence. On the other hand, the rulers of the world, controlled by the spirit of the religion which prevails, learn to consider inferiors as at less distance from them, to honour all men as men, and to be less inclined to treat the very lowest of the species with indignity or injustice.

That the Christian religion may be abused, by the aspirants at despotism, to the purposes of depressing the people, must be confessed; because history proves that it has been so abused. But the religion so abused, is the Christian religion, in name only; itsnature and spirit are most favourable to liberty and all the rights of man in a well regulated community.

"Religion," says the late Dr. Rotheram, "being of a peaceful and spiritual nature, has in itself no power but that which belongs to the mind, and seeks

to extend its dominion by no other means but those of conviction and the influence of motives suited to the freedom of the mind. To become a subject of this power, the mind must be free, master of itself and its own determinations; for into the kingdom of religion no slave can enter. All violence and compulsion therefore are utterly unknown to religion, the use of which is so far from serving its interests, that it directly and fundamentally overthrows them."

I have thought it proper to make these few observations, because some of the great sticklers for liberty, in recent times, have rashly dared to attack the church and the whole system of Christianity with unexampled virulence, as if they thought it stood in their way, an obstacle to the reform of abuses, and the abolition of absolute power; whereas no philosophy, no religion, no code of laws, no form of government in the world has tended so much to establish the rational equality of men as Christianity.

The principal rite of Christianity, the holy sacrament of the Lord's supper, contributes more than any thing else in this religion, to cause mankind to consider each other as brothers, entitled to an equality of comforts in this world, as far as justice and the known will of God will permit; for in this holy Sacrament, we become all united by the Holy Spirit without respect to external and secular distinctions. We become by it one body, whether rich or poor, weak or strong, high or low; and it is impossible that they who have worthily communicated at the altar should retain a wish to oppress or injure a fellow Christian in any rank of life. The state and frame of their minds must lead them by choice to increase human happiness, and diminish human misery, wherever and whenever they can exercise any power. To hurt others, they must know, would be to injure

their own souls, and to forfeit their pardon and their grace.

The gospel is indeed the true magna charta of human nature.

CONCLUSION.

I HAVE thus attempted to vindicate the Eucharist from the contempt and neglect into which it appears to have fallen among many, from a thoughtless profaneness; from a rustic stupidity; from a barbarous and heathenish habit of irreligion, contracted by immersion in sensuality and worldly cares; from a false philosophy, and from an erroneous theology. In this endeavour I have sought the support of Scripture; of the best divines of various ages, and of the opinions and practices of high antiquity. If I have erred, I have erred with a majority of the learned and the good; and my error, I think, cannot be injurious to the cause of religion and virtue.

It is better, as Dr. Waterland observes, to err on that side which ascribes too much to the Sacrament, than on that which ascribes too little; because it is erring on the side of the precepts; for Holy Scripture gives express, and very alarming cautions against paying too little regard to this holy institution, but none at all, against the contrary extreme. The error, if it be one, is also on the side of humility, modesty, and piety. Supposing us to be deceived, all that follows is, that we may be led to frequent the Sacrament oftener than we should otherwise do; to come to it with greater reverence, and to repeat our solemn vows for the leading of a

good life by the assistance of divine grace, with more serious and devout affections.

No divines that I know of, teach that the use of the outward Sacrament is of any avail, without inward faith and repentance, or entire obedience. The reception of the Sacrament is not a single duty, but involves a system of duties moral and religious. The outward part is the least and the lowest part; and, separate from a good heart, from faith and repentance, it is no duty at all. Such are the sentiments of the most judicious and pious divines of this country, and I adopt them cordially; but I will cite the words of Dr. Waterland, in the following paragraph, as they are quite applicable to my humble essay.

"What I have endeavoured has been to maintain the dignity of a venerable Sacrament, by the light of reason, Scripture, and antiquity, against unreasonable attempts to depreciate or undervalue it. The common methods of subversion begin with lessening the work of preparation, and then go on to sink the benefits: the next step in the progress, is to reduce the whole to a bare memorial, a memorial of an absent friend, a master or chief martyr; passing over the divine perfections of our Lord, and the all-sufficient merits of what he has done and suffered for us. Now, in order to build up again as others pull down, the business of these papers has been to show that the sacramental memorial is a memorial of Christ, God and man, who died a willing sacrifice for the sins of mankind; and that it is not a bare memorial or representation of something once done and suffered, but a real and present exhibition of those graces, comforts, or blessings accruing therefrom to every worthy receiver; that therefore proper acknowledgments and engagements are expedient

from us, and these require suitable preparations and qualifications, and a deportment thereto corresponding: in a word, self-examination, and self-approbation before-hand; serious resolutions of amendment at the time, and a conscientious care afterwards to persevere in well-doing to our lives' end." Such is the scope, and such the substance of my little treatise, which I trust, human errors excepted, is entirely conformable to the true scriptural and church doctrine.

Since the Eucharist is thus beneficial, and besides its mysterious effect in drawing down grace and pardon, conduces in a high degree to promote virtue, and render the conduct of life prudent, sedate, innocent, and useful, I cannot doubt but an attempt to revive a due degree of attention to it, is to serve society, especially in times so singularly unfavourable to religion as our own. It is not the querulous language of common-place declamation to assert, that the present times are singularly unfavourable to the prevalence of the Christian religion. I dwell no longer on the attempts of churchmen in England to desecrate or unhallow the Sacrament; (tell it not at Paris; publish it not in the streets of Racovia;) but I say, that the manners and principles of the present times are unpropitious, not only to the due performance of sacramental rites, but to all the duties of Christian devotion, and therefore render the attempts of the humblest theologian to revive the religious principle, desirable; and, whatever be their defects, venial.

As to the manners of the times, it is certain that commerce, amidst its many advantages, has introduced a general spirit of selfishness and avarice; so that the devotional regard, which, in days of comparative poverty and virtuous simplicity, religion was wont to excite, is now paid to money; that idol

of the heart, on whose altar, truth, virtue, freedom, are daily sacrificed, with all the enthusiasm of the blindest bigotry. Self-aggrandizement, and worldly affluence and honours, become the chief good when religion is lightly esteemed; and those who seek it not, or relinquish it for the "things which are not seen," are accounted in the world's estimate, fools or insane.

As to principles, the heart of man, be it remembered, can scarcely admit of two very strong attachments at the same time. When the world has seized the affections, the unseen Deity, and all the duties which result from an acknowledged relation to him, will be viewed both in the busy and gay world with indifference, and more than indifference, even with disgust; because they will often appear repugnant to the favourite pursuits of sordid interest and sensual pleasure. In this state of the public mind, the voice of infidelity will be heard with eagerness, while religious discourses and addresses will be treated with neglect, if they should escape scorn. The affairs of the world, the great prizes which glitter in the eyes of pride, avarice, and selfish pleasure, will alone be considered as worthy the anxious care, and ardent pursuit of a man of sense. Numbers defend and keep each other in countenance.

But it may be worth while to reflect a moment how nearly such a state approaches to atheism. The name shocks us, and is abhorred; but the reality is insensibly cherished by all who pay no worship to the Deity, though they profess to believe in one The reluctance which men fell to admit the appellation of atheist is, however, a proof that there are seeds of religious sentiments still remaining in them, which might be fostered by care, till in time, they might vegetate and bear fruit in abundance. With-

out care, they may perish, and the mind become a barren, dreary, dismal waste, uncheered by the sunshine of hope.

If religion comprehend the worship and obedience due from men to God, and all the duties which they are bound to perform, either with the prospect of obtaining his favour, or the fear of incurring his displeasure; then, they who do not worship God; they who do not obey him; they who do not act with the hope of his favour, or the apprehension of his displeasure, whatever their professions may be, or whatever name they may bear, are without religion, and consequently in practice, if not in theory, atheists. The difference between practical and speculative atheism is in effect small; they are both productive of wickedness, and terminate in misery. A man of this character must consider himself as the supreme and unaccountable judge of his own conduct, and as the sole arbiter of his own happiness. His selfishness will, perhaps, lead him to avoid the infringement of human laws: but where criminal indulgence or villainous practices, conducive to worldly interest, are compatible with secresy and safety, what shall restrain him from the violation of the divine laws? what shall preserve him from internal guilt, the pollution of the mind? from pride, envy, malevolence, which, like weeds, take root and spring up in the bosoms of all human beings uncultivated and uncleansed by divine grace?

The sacrament of the Lord's supper is one of the most effectual means of grace. The preparation for it, and all that concerns the reception of it, is highly favourable to virtue; and whatever favours virtue must promote happiness, both private and social. But the man whom I have just described, however decent his external appearance and character, can

never, while he continues to be comprehended under that description, avail himself of these means of grace and these supports of virtue.

In the gospel we read, that none were to go to the marriage-feast without a wedding-garment: that is, a disposition suitable to the solemnity:—"Put on Christ; put on the new man." This certainly is not to be done but by the assistance of the Holy Spirit; but how can he obtain the assistance of the Holy Spirit who never asks it in prayer? In order to put on this holy vestment, a worldly dress must be first put off and laid aside.

How far are they from a state of mind proper for communion with God and man in holy love, whose hearts are engrossed with the love of this world, and inflamed with a spirit of rivalry, envy, wrath, contention! Let us view men in the busy haunts of avarice; let us mark them at the gaming table; let us observe them unceasing attendants at every place of promised pleasure or vain ostentation. How alien seem their behaviour, their conversation, their hopes, and fears, and wishes from the pure and benevolent spirit of Christianity! Self admirers, and claiming admiration from all around them; proud, so as scarcely to look upon those, who are out of the pale of fashion and grandeur, as fellow-creatures; irritable and angry to such a degree as to be ready to strike and take away life for a look, much more a word, of offence; hating and hateful; or if there be the semblance of love among them, it is often but the love of interest, or a grosser passion partaking of the brutal, though varnished with the affected refinements of a false delicacy. Selfishness prevails even in the love which appears real; for the lover often relinquishes the object, and cares not what dire ill may await her, after the gratification of an appe-

tite; a scene in human affairs which evil spirits might delight in; but which must be incompatible with that religion which teaches, "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report."* These things our religion teaches and requires in all who profess it, as they tender their temporal and eternal felicity. To these things the sacrament of the Lord's supper is directly conducive.

Let it be duly noticed and remembered, by those who think outward conformity and decorum sufficient, that mere adherence to Christianity cannot constitute a Christian. Motives of sordid selfishness and mean policy may cause such an adherence; and render it often a zealous adherence, always a decent adherence; but these are motives uncongenial in their nature to the spirituality of the Christian religion. To produce the amiable qualities, described in the passage just now quoted from the Apostle, there is a necessity for faith and grace. Fair appearances may exist without either of these; as flowers and fruits may be hung in wreaths round a dead or withered pole, severed from the tree; but a root is necessary to cause the growth of flowers, and the maturity of fruitage.

That root must be goodness; and goodness springs inevitably from grace, though not from nature: for the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Goodness, as it is the Spirit of God; and the Holy Spirit is given most abundantly in the Sacrament by him who said, "I am that Bread of Life; I am the Living Bread which came down from Heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever, and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of

* Philipp. iv. 8.

the world. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him."*

Christ promised that he would be always with us even to the end of the world. He is with us at this day, by the influence of the Holy Spirit; and by his own appointment, that gift is more freely bestowed in the Sacrament, which he has rendered necessary by saying, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." "In the blessed Sacrament," says Bishop Taylor, "we receive him who is life and light, the fountain of grace, the sanctifier of our secular comfort, and the author of holiness and glory. But as it was at first, so it has continued; Christ came into the world, and the world knew him not; so Christ has remained in the world by the communication of this Sacrament, and yet he is not rightly understood, nor truly valued."

Nevertheless it is this particle of divinity, vouchsafed to us at the altar, which is "the pearl of great price;" the great treasure of the gospel; the distinguishing glory and benefit of the Christian religion.

As, from the simple principle of gravitation, conceded to Sir Isaac Newton, he was enabled to account for all the phenomena of nature; so by the doctrine of the Spirit's operation, from the Ascension to this hour, all the apparent difficulties of the Christian revelation are easily and satisfactorily explained. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God; and can any mortal presume to set bounds to its power, or account for all the modes or effects of its operation? However marvellous the dispensations of the gospel, yet when we believe that it is God's Spirit which produces them, we cease to doubt and to murmur.

* John, vi. 3.

It is clear from Scripture, that the gift of the Spirit is designed to correct the evil tendency of the human heart, in its fallen and unregenerate state, and to produce goodness, the prime and loveliest attribute of the Supreme Being. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

It is neither genius, nor sagacity, nor learning, nor riches, nor power that constitute the most valuable ornament and possession of man, but it is goodness;—a benevolent disposition, and a beneficent conduct and behaviour. Goodness is of a healing, fostering, conciliating quality, which converts every thing into happiness, as far as its power and influence extend; and it is in the meantime happy in itself, happy in its gentle and benign sensations, happy in the contemplation of goodness and of happiness diffused, increased, sublimed, prolonged. It is the perfection of man, and causes him to approach to the divine nature.

If we consider man without goodness, how detestable and wretched an animal do we behold him! All his superior sagacity tends only to increase his wickedness and misery. He becomes an evil spirit, and we may be tempted to exclaim in the words of Scripture, "why died he not from the womb?" Pride! malice! envy! revenge! what tormentors are ye of the human bosom in its natural, in its depraved, in its unregenerate state! What havoc do ye make in a world which God originally pronounced good! and among creatures whom God, both in the creation and redemption, designed to be happy! The Christian religion aims at meliorating the wild stock of human nature. It teaches the thorn to bear grapes and the thistle figs. It purifies the fountain of human actions, the heart itself; and the fountain

once clear, all the streams, in all their meanders, flow through the mazes of human life, comparatively with little pollution; and even that little may, from time to time, be removed by those merciful ordinances which are designed to cleanse and purify the heart by the operation of divine grace.

The Eucharist is one and the principal of those ordinances. It is an ordinance peculiarly adapted to the infirmity of human nature; for it is adapted to repair, while life remains, the decays of grace. The nature and efficacy of it I have attempted to explain, and have been guided by the Scriptures, and supported by human authority. After all, many will think differently from me on the subject; but while all who call themselves Christians agree in paying due honour to the institution, however they may understand it, let difference of opinion cause no violation of charity. "Of several persons," says Bishop Taylor, "beholders of a dove walking in the sun, as they stand in several aspects and distances, some see it of a red, and others of a clear purple, while others perceive nothing but green, yet all allow and love the beauties of the bird; so do the several forms of Christians, according as they may have been instructed by their first teachers or their own experience, conducted by their fancy and peculiar principles, look upon this glorious mystery the Sacrament; yet all affirm some great thing or other of it, and by their difference confess the immensity and the glory." To this I add an opinion of a most ingenious and learned modern divine, the Norrisian Professor in Cambridge. "One man," says he, "thinks that eating Christ's flesh and drinking his blood means only a commemoration of his death; another thinks it is emblematically accepting the benefits of Christ's sacrifice; a third thinks it is eating, in some inex-

plicable way, the substance of Christ's body into which the bread has been changed; a fourth, that it is eating the substance of Christ's body along with the sacramental bread: still, therefore, I say, whichever of these is right, or if none of them be right, the worthy communicant does that which is really meant in Scripture by eating the flesh of Christ and drinking his blood, and he gains all the benefit which God intended should arise from such eating and drinking; he does that which God hath commanded, and he obtains that which God hath promised."

Let it therefore be our chief care to become worthy communicants, and then, whether kneeling or sitting, whether we coincide exactly in our opinions or not, if we coincide in faith and charity, there is every reason to believe that we shall obtain pardon and sanctification. "The tree of knowledge," says Bishop Taylor, "became a tree of death to us, and the tree of life is now become an apple of contention. The holy symbols of the Eucharist were intended to be a contesseration and an union of Christian societies with God and with one another: and the evil taking of it disunites us from God, and the evil understand- of it divides us from each other." These sad effects will be avoided if we be duly careful to communicate with true faith and perfect charity, seeking the truth indeed always but seeking it in love.

"We are all alike in search of truth," says the late learned Dr. Rotheram; "let us therefore proceed amicably and charitably in the way: abstaining from all mutual violence, and from all vain and unbecoming confidence in ourselves, which is generally the ground of it, remembering that all are equally free, and all equally interested in the great and momentous pursuit; in the course of which, though all may not tread exactly in the same steps, though all

may not be happy enough to discover and constantly pursue the most direct path; nay, though all may make frequent deviations from it, yet hoping that we are in the main tending the right way, and that we shall all meet in the end.

"It is far above our power to bring all to embrace the same opinions; but one thing is in our power—to think charitably of each other; and to this we shall naturally be inclined, if we have those modest and humble sentiments of ourselves with which Christianity will inspire us. Were we all influenced by this spirit, we should then differ in opinion without being divided in affection."

Perfect unanimity, in the present state, is scarcely to be expected. Mutual concession should be made, among the professors of Christianity, wherever concession is consistent with the preservation of essentials. The Eucharist is an essential; because to it are annexed the present benefits of grace and pardon. It cannot be dispensed with; it must not be dishonoured. It is one grand mean of diminishing wickedness; and let all good men, however divided in modes of worship, unite in proclaiming to the world, that wickedness is the disgrace and misery of man; and religion his perfection and glory.

END OF VOLUME VII.

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